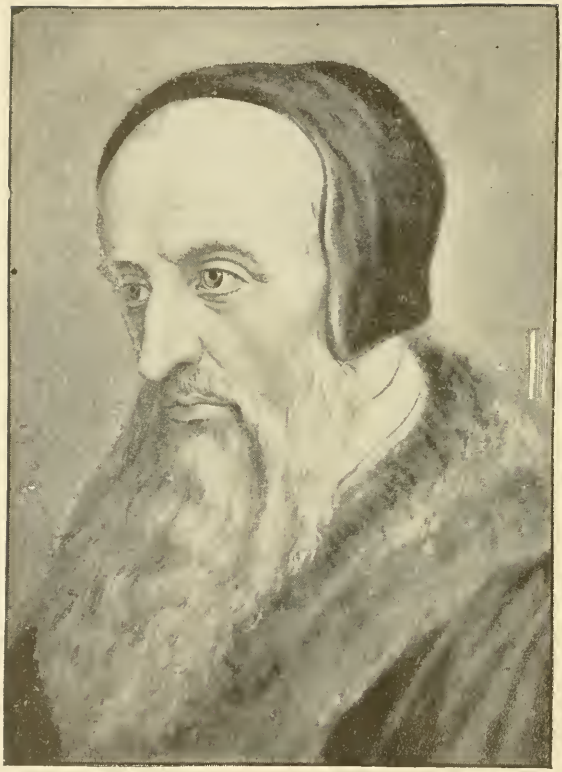
JOHN CALVIN
and the
Genevan Reformation



JOHN CALVIN.

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The Genevan Reformation:

A Sketch.

BY

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RICHMOND, VA.:
THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

TO

My Father and Mother,

AND TO

My Sister,

WHOM GOD HATH TAKEN,

IN EACH OF WHOM MUCH OF THE PURITY, STRENGTH AND SWEETNESS

OF CALVINISM WAS INCORPORATED,

THIS LITTLE ACCOUNT OF

CALVIN'S GREAT SERVICES TO GENEVA AND THE WORLD

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

We offer to the public, in the present form, our lectures on John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation, as given during the present session, 1899–1900. They were intended to serve as a supplement to class-book instructions, to correct, as we see things, some current misrepresentations, and to give emphasis to certain features of Calvin's teaching and life adjudged by us to be of special value as means to the enlargement of Christian manhood and the production of holy living. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it may be granted that we have fairly called it a sketch of Calvin's life and of the movement in Geneva of which he was the heart.

While the lectures were designed to meet the needs of our students as we conceive them, designed through them to affect the life of our Southern Zion, we hope that intelligent men in our church generally, and in other Calvinistic churches who have not time to read long biographies, will find in our "Sketch" a clear outline of the "Great John of Geneva" and his work; and we are perfectly assured that the men of our day ought to acquaint themselves with the character of Calvin. A thorough acquaintance with Calvin would prove a powerful uplifting force in all who love God, and would fill with veneration and awe for the majesty of Calvin's character a large portion of the unre-

generate multitude, and that, too, the nobler portion of that multitude.

It is hoped by some of our wide-awake pastors that history classes may be formed amongst their young men and women for the common study of the past of our own faith, polity, worship and life, and thus the life of the present church be deepened and broadened by close contact with those great epochs in the Reformed faith in which God opened the windows of heaven and poured out his blessings upon his waiting church. We have not been able to throttle the wish that this little book might come to be so used; and if that should happen, we would undertake, with the blessing of God, to follow it soon with similar sketches on the Reformation in the Netherlands, in England, and in Scotland, and in France.

Finally, we pray to the God of all grace, who gave John Calvin to Geneva and to the world, to use these pages in creating in every one who shall read them that supreme love to God, that sense of personal responsibility, that combination of purity, strength and sweetness which the Calvinistic system, beyond any other, has been creating in the past.

T. C. J.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
Richmond, Va., December 25, 1899.

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I. Sources.

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John Calvin and Theodore Beza: *Tracts Relating to the Reformation; With His Life by Theodore Beza.* Translated from the original Latin by Henry Beveridge, Esq. Vols. I., II., III. 8vo. Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society. MDCCCXLIV.

John Calvin (Bonnet): *Letters of. Compiled from the Original Manuscripts and Edited with Historical Notes. By Dr. Jules Bonnet.* Vols. I., II., III. Translated from the original Latin and French. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication. No. 821 Chestnut Street.

John Calvin: *Commentaries.* Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society.

II. Biographies, Histories, etc.

Paul Henry, D. D.: *The Life and Times of John Calvin, the Great Reformer.* Translated from the German of Paul Henry, D. D., minister and seminary-inspector in Berlin. By Henry Stebbing, D. D., F. R. S. Author of *History of the Church and the Reformation,* in Lardner's Encyclopædia; *History of the Church of Christ from the Diet of Augsburg; Lives of the Italian Poets,* etc. In two volumes. 8vo. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1851.

Very valuable for materials, but not well organized and written in involved and prolix style. The writer admires Calvin, but depreciates the great doctrine of predestination. He does not understand it. He brings out Calvin's catholicity of spirit, shows the earnestness of his desires for the union of Protestantism, but misstates the basis of union as Calvin saw it. He does not understand Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper, makes the kinship of Calvinism and Lutheranism greater than it was, turns his "history" into a plea for the support of the state-union of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Prussia brought about in the first quarter of our century. He does not understand and value aright true Presbyterian or representative church polity.

FELIX BUNGENER: *Calvin, His Life, His Labors, and His Writings.* Translated from the French of Fèlix Bungener. Author of *History of the Council of Trent.* Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 38 George Street. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co. Dublin: J. Robertson & Co. MDCCCLXIII.

This is a popular, but trustworthy, work in the main. It must be said of this author also that he is out of sympathy with some of the distinctive doctrines of Calvinism, particularly that of predestination, and that occasionally he makes statements which rest at best on no more than respectable tradition.

M. GUIZOT: *Great Christians of France: St. Louis and Calvin. By M. Guizot, Member of the Institute of France.* London: Macmillan & Co. 1879.

This is a short, popular, readable work. It is not intended to be more than a sketch. This author roundly says that Calvin made two great mistakes in his teaching which he would not have made had he lived in our more enlightened age. One of these mistakes he says was Calvin's teaching the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, and the other his teaching predestination. We have always admired M. Guizot's style as much as his judgment. We believe that John Calvin, by the grace of God, if he

were to appear on earth again in the blaze of nineteenth century civilization would honor the word of God as much as ever, and would be forced by facts evident to his discernment and intelligence to teach his doctrine of predestination.

THOMAS H. DYER: *The Life of John Calvin.* London: John Murray. 1850.

A valuable and "impartial work."

THOMAS SMYTHE: *Calvin and His Enemies.* Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education.

An excellent sketch. Dr. Smythe, however, commits himself to certain subordinate views; for example, that Calvin was ordained in the usual manner as a Protestant minister or teaching elder, which many of the profoundest students of the history of the times do not feel free to do.

ELIJAH WATERMAN: *Memoirs of the Life and Writing of John Calvin, Together with a Selection of Letters Written by Him and Other Distinguished Reformers.* Hartford. 1813.

THOMAS MCCRIE, D. D.: *The Early Years of John Calvin. A Fragment.* 1509–'36. Edinburgh. 1880.

A fragment, but valuable as far as it goes.

CHARLES W. SHIELDS: *Trial of Servetus.* In *Presbyterian and Reformed Review.* July, 1893.

E. RENAN (*Frothingham Translation*): *John Calvin, in "Studies in Religious History and Criticism."* New York. 1864.

A brilliant study.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE: *Calvinism, an Address Delivered to the Students of St. Andrews, March* 17, 1871, *in His Short Studies on Great Subjects.* Second series. New York. 1873.

WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM: *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation.* Edinburgh. 1862.

JOHN TULLOCH: *Leaders of the Reformation.* Edinburgh. 1839.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS: The Brittanica, Johnson's Universal, Schaff-Herzog, McClintock & Strong; all have good articles on Calvin.

PHILIP SCHAFF: *John Calvin, His Life and Character.* In *The Creeds of Christendom.* Vol. I., p. 421, *et seq.* New York: Harper Brothers. 1884.

PHILIP SCHAFF: *History of the Christian Church.* By Philip Schaff, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Church History in Union Theological Seminary, New York. Vol. VII. *Modern Christianity; The Swiss Reformation.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1892.

Not as sympathetic as the Vol. VI. on the German Reformation, in which the author deals at length with the life and character of Luther; but still a most helpful and informing work, with the usual characteristics of Dr. Schaff's style and method.

MERLE D'AUBIGNE: *History of the Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin.*

By a great admirer of Calvin, a true disciple of the reformers, a man of brilliant literary gifts. It is the work of a great advocate, very fraught with interest and instruction, though at times one-sided.

GEORGE P. FISHER, D. D.: *History of the Reformation.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

A work of accuracy, cool judgment, and prevalent impartiality.

LUDWIG HAUSSER (STURGE'S): *The Period of the Reformation,* 1577–1648. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers.

Remarkable for insight into the contemporary politics; but marked by want of sympathetic appreciation in the treatment of Calvin and Calvinism.

JOHN CALVIN AND THE GENEVAN REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

§ 2. *Divisions of Calvin's Life.*

JOHN CALVIN was the great constructive genius of the Reformation period; he was the father and head of the Reformation movement in the second generation of reformers; and he gave, by the good help of God, solidity and enduring persistence to the movement.

His life falls naturally into four periods, viz., *First,* that of his childhood and youth, the period of his training under the parental roof and in various schools, until his "sudden conversion" under the incitement of God's word and the operation of the Holy Ghost, 1509–1532;* *second,* that of his elaboration of the *doctrine* of the holy scriptures, chiefly embodied in his immortal "Institutes," 1532–1541; *third,* that of his establishment in Geneva and vindication from the scriptures of an order of ecclesiastical government corresponding to his system of faith, which is known as Presbyterianism, 1541–1549; *fourth,* that of his great controversies waged with the hope, not only of preserving the truths in his system of faith and polity, but of favoring Christian union among evangelical Christians, 1549–1564.

* This date is not perfectly certain. It is certain, however, that a little after the middle of the year 1533 Calvin was an advocate of the persecuted reformers.

§ 3. *Origin of the Genevan Reformation; its Progress.*

Calvin has not the honor indeed of having begun the Reform movement in Geneva. His labors there did not begin until 1536, at which time the city had already formally adopted the Reformation. The credit of instituting the movement for reform in Geneva must be given to the impulsive, rash, but ingenuous and noble, William Farel and his helpers between 1532 and 1536; but the work of securing, maintaining and perfecting the Reformation called for a man of larger gifts than those possessed by Farel or any of his earlier co-workers. Calvin was the man needed. Pressed with all the stern zeal of an Old Testament prophet by Farel into the conduct of the struggle in Geneva, Calvin at once became the real head and heart of the movement. Henceforth, while he lived, even through his period of exile, the history of John Calvin includes the history of Geneva. He was at once the embodiment and highest exponent of its excellences and the inveterate foe, warring ever against its evils. He was also much more. His history is, in a large sense, the history of Reformed Christendom of his day, in all its religious, moral and political forthputtings.

CHAPTER II.

Calvin's Childhood and Youth: The Period of His Training under the Parental Roof and in Schools Till His Sudden Conversion in 1532, and Determination to the Service of Christianity.

§ 4. *Birth and Parentage.*

John Calvin was born July 10, 1509, at Noyon, a cathedral town in the northern province of Picardy in France. His father was Gérard Cauvin, a man who occupied a position of considerable prominence in his region, being district attorney for his county, secretary to the Bishop of Noyon, and proctor of the chapter of the diocese. He was a man of harsh and austere character, but honored and favored by the most distinguished families of his district. Gérard Cauvin was the son of a cooper by trade of the village of Pont l'Eveque. As he had lifted himself in the social and civil scale, so he was desirous of doing for his children. The priesthood has always been looked upon by the poor but aspiring as an avenue to ease and distinction. Naturally, therefore, Gérard destined his boys to the priesthood. His wife, Jeanne Lanfranc, of Cambrai, noted for beauty and piety, was ready enough, no doubt, to unite with her ambitious husband in giving her sons to the church. Accordingly, the two brothers of John Calvin who grew up were educated for clergymen and became chaplains in the Romish Church, and John was for some years also destined by his father to the priesthood.

Gérard's day was the day of pluralities, absenteeism, and all irregularities in the filling of ecclesiastical positions. "Pope Leo X. received the tonsure as a boy of seven, was made archbishop in his eighth, and cardinal-deacon in his

thirteenth year (with the reservation that he should not put on the insignia of his dignity nor discharge the duties of his office till he was sixteen), besides being canon in three cathedrals, rector in six parishes, prior in three convents, abbot in thirteen additional abbeys, and bishop of Amalfi, deriving revenues from them all." * Gérard was, therefore, doing the regular irregular thing when in John's twelfth year he secured for him a part of the revenue of a chaplaincy in the cathedral of Noyon, and when in his son's eighteenth year he secured for him the additional charge of S. Martin de Marteville. True he was not of canonical age, he had to hire a priest to officiate in his place, but he had received the tonsure, looked toward the priesthood, and on the income of these places he could pursue his studies preparatory thereto.

§ 5. *His Education.*

His early education was with the children of the noble family of Mommor. With the younger members of the Mommor family also he was sent to Paris at the age of fourteen, or in the year 1523, to study the classics and philosophy in the colleges of La Marche and Montaigu. In La Marche he was helpfully impressed by Maturinus Corderius, a man of genuine worth, who became a helper of Calvin in Geneva years later. In the College of Mont Aigu he distinguished himself by his acquisitions in the grammar course and in dialectics. He had as his master here a Spaniard of considerable attainments. Four years were spent in these colleges. They were years of earnest study. Calvin was equally distinguished already as a scholar and as a youth of severe morals. He was a strict censor of everything vicious in himself and in his companions. Hence he was called by his fellows, without reproach, "The Accusative Case."

During this period he had been a Romanist of the Ro-

* Schaff: *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. VII., p. 301.

manists and strongly drawn toward the priesthood; but his father, discerning his wonderful talents and seeing that the law was a surer road to wealth and honor, had changed his former purpose and now directed his son to study law. To this change John seems to have himself been driven by a dissatisfaction with the old theology. He had been led of late to the study of the scriptures by Peter Robert Olivet.

To study law Calvin went first to Orleans to sit at the feet of Petrus Stella, the first French lawyer of his time. Thence he removed to Bourges and studied under the world-famous Alciat. At Orleans he had studied very hard, working late at night, and going over everything, meditating on and digesting it, after awaking in the morning before arising. He had been regarded rather as a teacher than a pupil, often officiating as a professor. "On his departure he was presented with a doctor's degree free of expense and with the unanimous consent of all the peofessors as a return for the services which he had rendered to the academy." * At Bourges, while not neglecting law, he formed a friendship with Melchior Wolmar, from whom he learned Greek.

These three great professors were naturally adversaries to the church. They knew that much of what the church taught had no historical basis, and French jurists to that time and long after were the hereditary antagonists of Rome. They would naturally give an impetus to Calvin's anti-Romeward movement.

§ 6. *His Conversion and Further Education.*

Though occupied with law and Greek, Calvin was irresistibly drawn toward the study of theology while at Bourges. He studied the Bible with great earnestness and thoroughness. Here he seems to have been converted. In speaking of himself at this time he says, "My conscience was very far from being in a condition of certain peace.

* Beza: *Life of John Calvin,* p. xxiii. in Calvin's Tracts, Vol. I.

Every time that I looked down into myself or lifted my heart up to God, such a supreme horror took possession of me that there was no purification or expiation which could have cured me; and the more closely I considered my own nature, so much the more was my conscience goaded with fierce stings, so that there remained no other comfort except to deceive myself. But God, who took pity upon me, conquered my heart and subdued it to docility by a sudden conversion. . . . Having then received some taste and knowledge of true piety, so great a desire was incontinently kindled in me to profit by it that, although I did not entirely renounce all other studies, yet I paid but little attention to them." *

His residence at Orleans seems to have been interrupted by a visit to Noyon in the summer of 1531, on the death of his father, and by a sojourn at Paris in the same year.

§ 7. *His First Literary Venture.*

In April, 1532, Calvin ventured before the public with his first literary work—his commentary on the treatise on "Clemency by Seneca"—the publication of which reduced him to temporary financial embarrassment. In this work Calvin appears as a brilliant humanist. Henry, Guizot, and others, attempt to discover in it the apologist for the Reformation; they would have us believe that the real motive of the work was to induce Francis I. to take a more favorable attitude toward the reformers; but, as Bungener says, "The author in his most confidential letters says nothing of the kind, nor is there anything in his later works, in which he might so often have found an opportunity of recalling the true intention of this. . . . In fact, the idea attributed to him does not belong to his age, and is one from which no man is further than he. To ask *clemency* of a king for the friends of the reformed faith would, in his

* Quoted in Guizot: *St. Louis and Calvin,* p. 159. *Cf.* Preface to the Psalms.

eyes, have been to ask clemency and compassion for truth—for the gospel—and to ascribe to the king authority over God himself." *

Calvin appears in his commentary on Seneca as a Humanist. He appears there as a very high one—a moral zealot, punctual, orderly and conscientious in regard to little things as well as great things—a Saul of Tarsus. He began his literary effort, with this book, as a Humanist; he was soon to show himself as a Christian. He was to come to love the *religion* set forth by Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles more than he loved letters. In this respect his experience was like that of Zwingli and that of Melanchthon. While they walked in intellectual light—the intellectual light of the word of God—God begot them unto life by the power of the Holy Ghost.

No wonder that Rome hates the open Bible and that Protestantism loves the open Bible. God by his word spoke peace to the tortured soul of Luther; filled the cultured souls of Zwingli and Melanchthon with blood earnestness; turned the refined, penetrating, profound, but Pharisaic, genius, John Calvin, into the greatest Christian of his day, the bulwark of his truth against all comers, its propagator to the ends of the earth.

§ 8. *Determination to the Service of Christianity.*

Calvin had the world before him. As a humanist, a churchman, or a lawyer, he might have made for himself a career of surpassing splendor. His "sudden conversion" diverted his energies into an humbler and grander avenue. It was thus made his to be the greatest interpreter and exponent of the religion of Jesus Christ since the days of the apostles.

It was impossible that a man of his gifts and graces should not become the head and leader of the movement

* Bungener: *Life of Calvin*, p. 24.

for reform. People saw that he could serve them. He says of himself and the period immediately subsequent to his conversion, "Being of a shy and solitary nature, I have always loved retirement and tranquillity; I began, therefore, to seek out some hiding place and some means of withdrawing myself from my fellows; but, so far from attaining my desire, it seemed on the contrary, as if every retreat I chose in a remote spot was at once converted into a public school. In short, although it has always been my chief desire to live in private without being known, yet God has led me hither and thither, and turned me in so many directions by different changes that he never left me at peace in any place until, in spite of my own desires, he made me come forward and brought me into public life." *

One of the first services which the church of Calvin's day needed was a reconstruction of the system of scripture teaching. Luther and the early reformers had thrown into confusion the Mediæval efforts to construe this teaching. The world was waiting for some man to pick the elements of truth out of the old beliefs; and out of them and the new truths brought to light by the now open Bible give it a connected system of Bible teaching. Calvin heard the cry of need. In the next chapter we shall sketch his history as he attempts to supply the need.

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* p. 159. *Cf.* Preface to the Psalms.

CHAPTER III.

The Period of Calvin's Elaboration of the Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures Chiefly Embodied in His Immortal Institutes, 1532–'41.

§ 9. *Open Break with the Church of Rome.*

For a little while after Calvin's conversion there appeared to be some probability of the French court's favoring reform. The king's sister, Margaret, was a patroness of the new movement. Several preachers who favored a moderate reformation were heard in the Paris pulpits. The king, from political motives and out of regard to his sister, was so conciliatory as to incur the suspicion of favoring the Reformation. He even invited Melanchthon to Paris as a councillor. Hence Calvin, along with others, seems, at this date, to have looked for reform from within the church. These hopes were not destined to fulfillment, and Calvin himself helped to discover their groundlessness.

His friend Nicolas Cop had been elected rector of the University of Paris, and was to deliver his inaugural oration on All Saints' day, November 1, 1533. At his request Calvin prepared his oration. This oration was at once an attack on the scholastic theologians of the day as sophists and obscurantists, and a plea for a reformation on a New Testament basis. Both the Sorbonne and the Parliament regarded this academic oration as an attack on the church. In consequence both Cop and Calvin were forced to flee. Calvin is said to have escaped in the garb of a vine-dresser with a hoe on his shoulder, after having been let down from a window by the use of sheets.

§ 10. *A Wandering Evangelist in France,* 1533–'34.

Calvin's flight from Paris turned out to the furtherance of the gospel in Southern France. He passed a large part

of this period under the protection of Queen Margaret of Navarre in her native city of Angouleme. Calvin lived in Angouleme with a wealthy friend, Louis du Tillet, who was canon of the cathedral, and who had acquired a very fine library, containing many rare and valuable works. He taught Tillet Greek, cultivated the friendship of eminent men, aided Peter Robert Olivet in the completion and revision of the French translation of the Bible, which was published at Neuchatel in 1535 with a preface by Calvin.

From Angouleme he made excursions to Paris, Orleans, Nerac—where he met Le Fèvre d'Etaples, the father of French Protestantism, to Poictiers—where he made converts of several persons of eminence, and celebrated the communion of the Lord's Supper for the first time after the Protestant conception.*

Toward the close of his stay at Angouleme Calvin, on a venturesome visit to Paris, met for the first time Michael Servetus. He was so impressed with the impiety and danger of his views that he was ready to incur the risk of a semi-public disputation with him. A time and place for the disputation was fixed. Calvin kept his appointment, but Servetus did not appear, as Calvin reminded him twenty years later.

Calvin had resigned his ecclesiastical benefices at Noyon and Pont l'Eveque May 4, 1534; he had thus formally closed his connection with the Church of Rome. In this year he wrote at Orleans his first book in behalf of Protestant theology, entitled the *Sleep of the Soul.* On scriptural grounds he overturns the Anabaptist conceit of the sleep of the soul between death and the resurrection, and maintains the conscious communion of saints. His purpose was to protect evangelical Protestantism from the charges of heresy and vagary.

The outbreak of persecution in the fall of 1534 was the occasion of Calvin's leaving his native land. He was ac-

* This rests on a somewhat uncertain tradition.

companied by Louis du Tillet, his friend and pupil, who was to remain his companion till August, 1537, and then return to his country and the Roman Church. Near Metz they were robbed by an unfaithful servant. They reached Strasburg in destitution, but were kindly received and aided, especially by Bucer.

§ 11. *In Exile in Basle—The Production of the Institutes.*

After a short interval of rest at Strasburg Calvin and his friend proceeded to Basle. Here he was to secure the publication of his immortal "Institutes," in the year 1536. He seems to have completed the manuscript in August, 1535.

The purpose of this work he himself states in the preface in the following noble words:

"Most mighty and renowned monarch! When I began the composition of this treatise, I entertained no thought of laying it before your Majesty. My object was to exhibit the simplest elements of Christianity, and thus to lead those who had already some love of the gospel to the knowledge of its principles. I labored especially for my fellow countrymen, the French, knowing that many among them hunger and thirst after righteousness, while few only have attained to even a moderate degree of knowledge. Hence the unpretending character of the book. When, however, I saw that certain cruel persecutors possessed such power in your kingdom, that no place of refuge for true doctrine existed any longer, it seemed to me that I should be accomplishing a useful design could I at the same time and by the same means both instruct them and make you acquainted with the nature of our belief; that you might thence learn the real character of that doctrine against which those madmen rage with such fury and carry fire and sword through your kingdom."

Here Calvin makes the primary aim of the "Institutes" to be the instruction of his fellow Protestants among the French. A secondary aim was apologetic. Calvin, in his

preface to the Psalms, published years later, enlarges on this apologetic aim. He says, "This was the occasion which led to the publication of the 'Institutes.' My first object was to free my brethren, whose death is precious in the sight of God, from a shameful slander; my next was, as many of our unhappy people were threatened with similar cruelties, to excite at least some feeling of pity and compassion for their sufferings in other nations."

With the succeeding editions of the "Institutes" the primary aim became more and more controlling. It was designed to be a book of instruction in the essential doctrines of the gospel for the people, but mediately, as it was designed to be used immediately by candidates for the ministry in their training. In the preface to the Strasburg edition of 1539 Calvin tells us that the design of the work was "so to prepare theological students for the reading of God's word, that they might easily commence their labors." He had therefore arranged the subjects in such order, and had so explained them, that the reader might comprehend without difficulty what he was to find in the holy scriptures, and to what end he was to use all that which they taught him. "In his expositions [of the books of the Bible] therefore he had introduced no long dogmatical investigations. The pious reader would accordingly be spared great annoyance if he undertook the reading of this work with judgment." He adds, "My commentary on the Epistle to the Romans will explain my meaning better than words."

Here we learn that the "Institutes," as issued in the second edition, was intended to serve as an introduction to the study of the holy scriptures on the part of theological students, which is ever the great end of systematic theology.

Just here we come on the *most conspicuous feature* of the great system embodied in the "Institutes," its thoroughgoing biblical character. Much war is made to-day on systematic theology. "Biblical theology" is contrasted with systematic as if systematic were not thoroughly biblical, and some such systems are not biblical. The Mediæval

system builders were guilty of doing what present decriers of systematic theology charge all systematic theologians with having done. They made large use of occasional and detached passages of scripture interpreted without much regard to context or to historical meaning. They set out not to construct out of the contents of Bible teaching a well-knit system of truth, but to prove by detached passages the several parts of a system derived from other than scriptural sources. Calvin's system is quite different. He was thoroughly saturated with Bible teaching. There was no man of his day who made less of human philosophy or ecclesiastical tradition as a source of authority in religion. He made nothing of them. He accepted the Bible as the inspired word of God. He put it in the place of the infallible church. It was to him the one source of authority in religion. His systematic theology—the "Institutes"—was an attempt to organize in one comprehensive whole the several teachings of the Bible as he saw them. In particular, he would give place in this system to those great doctrines of sovereign election, salvation by grace, and justification by faith which the reformers had discovered anew, or for the first time as taught in the scriptures. Calvin did not, indeed, try to write a history of the unfolding of doctrine in the ages of inspiration. In that sense his theology is not "biblical theology;" but he did try to take the Bible teachings and arrange them, and them only, into a comprehensive system; and no other man since the days of the apostles has done so much to give us a systematic view of purely scriptural truth. No man can say with truth that Calvin's "Institutes" were not intended to be such an attempt at the systematic exhibition of scripture truth; for he professedly tried to give such a work in the "Institutes;" he taught that in its light the Bible should be studied, and therein invited the closest comparison of the totality of scripture truth with the teachings of his book. Nor can any one say that Calvin's effort was not proximately successful. His was the most biblical syste-

matic theology of his day, just as the Calvino-Covenant theology is the most biblical systematic theology of our day. It is far more biblical than any so-called "biblical theology" yet produced. Guizot says, "His book is only the development and commentary of the great Christian truths, facts, dogmas and precepts with which the holy scriptures furnished him." * Philip Schaff says, "His whole theology is scriptural rather than scholastic, and distinguished for the skillful and comprehensive working up of the teaching of the Bible, as the only pure fountain of revealed truth and the infallible rule of the Christian faith." . . . "He could assert with truth on his deathbed that he never knowingly twisted or misinterpreted a single passage of the scriptures." †

The first edition of the "Institutes" was a short handbook containing six chapters, entitled severally, of the Decalogue, of the Apostles' Creed, of the Lord's Prayer, of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, of the Other So-Called Sacraments, of Christian Liberty, Church Government and Discipline. "The second edition has seventeen, the third twenty-one chapters. In the author's last edition of 1559 it grew to four or five times its original size, and was divided into four books, each book into a number of chapters (from seventeen to twenty-five), and each chapter into sections. It follows in the main, like every good catechism, the order of the Apostles' Creed, which is the order of God's revelation as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first book discusses the knowledge of God the Creator (theology proper); the second, the knowledge of God the Redeemer (Christology); the third, of the Holy Spirit and the application of the saving work of Christ (Soteriology); the fourth, the means of grace, namely, the church and the sacraments." ‡

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* p. 180.

† Schaff: *Creeds of Christendom,* Vol. I., p. 458.

‡ Schaff: *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. VII., p. 334.

It is commonly agreed that the work was greatly improved as it passed through its numerous editions, and the author himself tells us that he was never satisfied with it till in the final revision and edition of 1559. Nevertheless, it is as commonly agreed that in the first edition the elements of the entire system appeared. The later additions were really expansions.

The following elements are found in the "Institutes": (1) The ecumenical, or the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christology elaborated by the great ecumenical councils of the fourth century and held by the "orthodox" Greek and Latin churches, as well as by evangelical Protestants. (2) The Augustinian element, or those doctrines which the great Bishop of Hippo had deduced from the scriptures, especially from the writings of Paul—man's original uprightness, the fall, the consequent total depravity of all Adam's natural posterity, their moral inability to help themselves, the servitude of their wills to sin, the necessity of salvation by grace if men are to be saved at all, and, as corollaries, the doctrines of predestination and the final perseverance of the saints.

Calvin took a clearer view of these Bible doctrines than Augustine was able to get. Augustine was in bondage to the sacramentalism of his age. He believed in the necessity of water baptism in order to salvation, and he believed in the *ex opere operato* theory as to the efficiency of the sacraments; he believed that water baptism is so tied to spiritual regenerative grace that every one really baptized with water is regenerated. He knew only too well, however, that many who have been baptized give the most solid evidence afterwards of being in a lost estate. He could not hold to the doctrine of the perseverance of the *saints* therefore. Instead he taught that certain regenerate persons fall from grace, and taught only the perseverance of the *elect*. Calvin had shaken himself so far free from the trammels of sacramentalism that he could teach the Bible doctrine of the perseverance of saints, or the regenerate.

(3) Third, the Anselmic-Aquinas element, or the substitutionary theory of the atonement, which Anselm set forth in the form of equivalence and which Thomas Aquinas developed and modified, giving us the so-called substitutionary theory of the atonement. (4) The common Protestant element, including the doctrine of justification by faith, the scriptures the sole source of authority in religion, the analogy of faith the great canon for their interpretation, the doctrine of progressive sanctification, of immediate passage, at death, into glory, the denial of purgatory, the doctrine of the final judgment with eternal rewards and punishments, the definition of the church as two-fold—visible and invisible; affirmation of the right of infant church membership, notwithstanding inability to give proper grounds for administering baptism to children, assertion of the duty of the state to uphold and protect the church, abolition of all holy days save Sabbath, insufficient vindication of Sabbath, denial of transubstantiation, of sacrament of penance, of extreme unction, of marriage as a sacrament, etc. (5) The element common to Calvin and Luther—the verbal inspiration of the scriptures,* our justification on the ground of Christ's righteousness imputed to us and received by faith. (6) The Zurich-Genevan-Anglican element—the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as set forth in the *Consensus Tigurinus.* (7) The ultramontane view of proper relation of church and state held in common with Roman Church. (8) The distinctive Calvinistic element—the Presbyterian form of ecclesiastical polity, and the emphasis laid on certain cardinal doctrines of theology, anthropology, soteriology taught for the most part by Augustine, and by him and his school solely, since the days of the apostles, viz., *unconditional election, particular redemption, total depravity, efficacious grace, and perseverance of the saints.*

* Schaff misrepresents Calvin here. We suppose the Doctor was under the influence of the time-ghost of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

These doctrines are often spoken of as distinctive of Calvin's teaching. This is not correct. Every one of them had been taught by devout Bible students prior to Calvin; but the emphasis laid on them in Calvin's system does constitute one of its distinctive features. No man had given to predestination its proper place in theology before. Calvin saw clearly that it was involved in the scriptural doctrine of God and necessary to the honor of God. He also realized quite as fully as Augustine the comfort of the doctrine to a Christian and its necessity if salvation be realized in any case. So Calvin's great grasp of Bible truth enabled him to define the scope of the redemptive work, the estate of moral helplessness into which man came by the fall, and the need and fact of salvation by grace, and man's assurance of salvation once he believes, as they had never been defined before. They are all vital doctrines and fundamental in the Bible teaching; and it is at once a great merit and a distinctive feature of Calvin's system that he brings these doctrines into becoming prominence.

We shall say something further about Calvin's church polity in a succeeding lecture.

It should also be said in this connection that John Calvin's Calvinism was probably broad enough to include both sublapsarianism and supralapsarianism. It is said, with doubtful justice, that in the "Institutes" he speaks as a supralapsarian, but in his commentaries as a sublapsarian; he does not seem to have cared to make the distinction. It is unjust therefore to him to align him with either side. Perhaps he would have said, as our own Dr. Dabney * has said, that the distinction is one that should never have been made. To us it seems certain that he regarded himself as holding the very ground of Augustine on this subject. Historians generally call Augustine a sub—or an infra—lapsarian. If Calvin is to be called sub—or supra—, then

* R. L. Dabney, D. D., LL. D.: *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology,* p. 233.

he must be called sub; but, we repeat, it appears that he would have preferred to bear neither title. The gist of his view in his own words is, "Man falls according to the appointment of divine providence; but he falls by his own fault." *

§ 12. *Travelling in Italy and France under the Name of Charles d'Espeville,* 1535–1536.

Calvin, after completing his work on the "Institutes" in 1535, made his way to Italy. He was probably moved by a desire to preach the gospel in the very strongholds of the Romish Church. He may have been looking for an opening for a more active life work, albeit he was so disinclined to break into his habits of study. He spent some time at the court of Renèe, daughter of Louis XII. of France, Duchess of Ferrara. He won many admirers there and some earnest disciples. The most important of these was the Duchess herself.

Calvin remained her pastor from this time till his death in 1564. He gave her noble rebukes when she needed them, as in 1555 when her husband forced her to conform to the Romish ceremonial; noble commendation, as when she opened her castle of Montargis in France, whither she had returned, to the reformers in 1562, and when she gave her haughty refusal to the summons of the Duke de Guise that she should give them up; and the noblest consolation possible under the circumstances after the death of her son-in-law, this same Duke de Guise.

After a few months' stay in Ferrara, persecution arising, Calvin travelled to several other points in North Italy, everywhere talking and preaching, that the truth might be spread. In 1536 he stayed some weeks with a family of distinction in the vicinity of Aosti; but alarm was given to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Measures were taken for the arrest of the disturber. He escaped, but with difficulty, having to traverse dangerous Alpine passes.

* Calvin: *Institutes,* Book III., Chap. xxiii., Sec. 8.

Calvin went thence into France. He spent some time at Noyon; won to his views Mary, one of his sisters, his brother Anton and others. France, however, could no longer be his home. Accordingly, with his brother and sister, he set out once more for Basle; but as the war, again renewed between the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I. of France, was being waged in Lorraine, he essayed to go by way of Geneva.

This city, which was to be the great theatre of his action, was reached about the end of August, 1536. He was merely passing through. He did not, as he tells us, propose to stay more than one night. Providence had brought to Geneva in an hour of need the man she needed—the only man in all Europe or the world, so far as is known, who could do Geneva's and Christendom's work needing done then and there.

§ 13. *The Reformation in Geneva Prior to Calvin's Coming,* 1532–1536.

Philip Schaff says with reference to the political history of Geneva, "Geneva was originally governed by a bishop and a count, who divided the spiritual and secular government between them. Duke Charles III. of Savoy tried to subdue the city with the aid of an unworthy and servile bishop, Pierre de le Baume, whom he appointed from his own family with the consent of Pope Leo X. But a patriotic party, under the lead of Philibert Berthelier, Besançon Hugues and François Bonivard (Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon"), opposed the attempt and began a struggle for independence, which lasted several years and resembles on a small scale the heroic struggle of Switzerland against foreign oppression. . . . The patriots gained the victory with the aid of the German Swiss. On February 20, 1526, Bern and Freiburg concluded an alliance with Geneva, and pledged their armed aid for the protection of her independence. . . . The bishop appealed in vain to the Pope and the Emperor, and left Geneva for St. Claude; but he

had to accept the situation and continued to rule ten years longer (till 1536).

"This political movement, of which Berthelier is the chief hero, had no connection with the Reformation, but prepared the way for it, and was followed by the evangelical labors of Farel and Viret and the organization of the Reformed Church under Calvin." *

Even during the struggle for civil liberty opposition to the Romish Church and to the Genevan clergy had begun to grow. This opposition was fed by reports of the Lutheran and Zwinglian movements, and by the establishment of the Reformation in Bern in 1528.

But the pioneer of Protestantism in Geneva was William Farel. He was one of the spiritual sons of Jaques le Fèvre d'Etaples of France, one of the most eloquent and forceful evangelical preachers of his day, a devoted servant of God ready to do or suffer anything in Christ's cause; bold, fearless, a born fighter; ingenuous, noble, but somewhat rash, impetuous and violent in speech.

His preaching was so radical that he was driven out of France toward the close of 1523. He spent some time in Basle and Strasburg; taught school in Switzerland in various places after 1526; was made one of Bern's missionaries when that city adopted the Reformation in 1528. He preached with great energy in most of the districts under Bernese control. In 1529 he established the Reformation in Neuchâtel. He helped to secure the adoption of the reformed doctrines by the Waldenses in Piedmont in 1532.

As Farel was returning from this visit he stopped in Geneva. He explained to distinguished representatives of the party of patriots the Protestant doctrines. The council was alarmed and ordered Farel to leave the city. He was summoned to the Episcopal Council in the house of Abbé de Beaumont, the vicar-general of the diocese. He was

* Schaff: *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. VII., pp. 233, 234.

treated there in the most contemptuous and contumelious manner. He responded to this treatment with great dignity, answering that he was ready to dispute with them and to give an account of his faith and ministry. He was ordered to leave the city in three hours. He escaped with difficulty, covered with spittle and bruises inflicted by the infuriated priests.

His next appearance in Geneva was in January, 1534, when, under the protection of Bern, he held a public disputation with Furbity in the presence of the Great and Small Councils and the delegates of Bern. This time Farel's stay in Geneva was of longer duration.

On the 27th of August, 1535, the Great Council of the Two Hundred issued an edict of the Reformation. This was followed by another May 21, 1536. It was stated as follows to the inhabitants of Geneva assembled in the Church of St. Peter, "By a decree of the Council of Two Hundred you are assembled here, that it may be known if there are any among you who have anything to say against the word of God and the doctrine which is preached to us in this city. . . . If so, let them speak so that we may know if there be any who are not willing to live according to the gospel which has been proclaimed to us since the abolition of the mass and of the papal sacrifice." "Upon which," says the register, "Without one single opposing voice, it was unanimously agreed to, and carried by the holding up of hands, and a promise and an oath taken to God that all the people would live according to this holy evangelical law and the word of God which has been made known to them, forsaking all masses and other papal ceremonies and frauds, images and idols and living together in unity and in obedience to law." *

This was the birthday of the Reformation in Geneva; but the child that day brought forth was born into a diffi-

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* pp. 212, 213. He quotes the passages.

cult and untoward environment. It needed most careful attendance, wise guidance and strong defence. Though Farel had done much, he felt that he was not competent to make the movement a success. He was not preëminently a man of thought, of tact, of organizing ability. He could wage effective war on error. He fought as boldly as any man could and with might for what was right; but there was need now of a great constructive genius. Farel felt this himself. He was ingenuous and noble in an unusual degree. He was willing that his own reputation might be eclipsed by that of an abler man. He sought for such a man for Geneva.

Just at this time he was informed that Calvin was in the city for a single night; he hastened to the presence of the author of the "Institutes." He endeavored to persuade him to undertake with him the work of carrying on the reformation in Geneva. Calvin was strongly disinclined to undertake work of this sort. He yearned for leisure in which to study and set forth the truth. He could not but be conscious of his great capacities as a thinker and writer. He was constitutionally timid. He shrank from such conflicts as he saw inevitably before the leaders of the Reformation in Geneva—a city notorious for its moral laxity. As Calvin hesitated Farel became insistent. "When he saw," says Calvin, "that he could gain nothing by prayer, he tried imprecation, demanding that it might please God to curse my retirement and the tranquillity which I was seeking for my studies, if I held back and refused to give succor and aid at such a time of need. And these words terrified and shook me as if God from on high had stretched out his hand upon me to stop me, so that I renounced the journey which I had undertaken; but conscious of my diffidence and timidity, I refused to bind myself to undertake any definite office." *

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin*, p. 214. Quoted from Calvin's Preface to the Commentary on the Psalms.

Nevertheless, recognizing in this call the voice of God, this shrinking youth was soon to turn himself into a man of steel. Turbulent and licentious Geneva was to become "the scene of every crisis and every problem, great or small, which can agitate human society." It was a "tottering republic" with "a wavering faith and a nascent church." Calvin knew that license and anarchy were worse than the tyranny of Savoy and the servitude to the Pope. He saw the necessity of a positive faith and government in order to the salvation of the city and the people. He determined to secure both the adoption of a confession of faith and the application of a form of discipline—a Bible creed and a Bible form of church government; he determined to apply in Geneva the *truth of God and the power of God.*

§ 14. *Calvin's First Period in Geneva,* 1536–1538.

Calvin began his labors as teacher on the 5th of September, 1536, with expository lectures on Paul's epistles and other parts of the New Testament. These lectures were received with the greatest favor. They were delivered in the afternoons in the Cathedral of St. Peter to great throngs of enthusiastic listeners. The people seemed hungry for the word of God. Calvin expounded it with approximate mastery. He has perhaps never been equalled as an expositor of the word of God.

His ideal of an expositor is set forth in the preface of his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans and is worthy of the careful study of every one who would ever successfully expound the word of God. In his view "the most excellent quality in an expositor is clearness combined with brevity, it being his particular duty to exhibit the spirit of the writer; whence he errs from his proper line in proportion as he turns the attention of the reader from the writer on which he is employed." "We therefore wished that some one might arise," he continues, "among those who devote themselves to this branch of theology, who would undertake to facilitate the study of scriptures without

carrying the student through too great a mass of commentaries. How far I have succeeded in this attempt I leave you and my readers to judge." *

Toward the latter part of September a disputation between the Protestants and Roman Catholics was held at Lausanne. To this conference Calvin went as the young lieutenant of Farel. Farel conducted the debate on the Protestant side for the first five days. Then Calvin made a couple of short speeches. They made clear his knowledge both of the fathers and the scriptures and the Romish misunderstanding and misuse of each. Their effect was tremendous. The Reformation was adopted in the Pays de Vaud as it had been in Geneva.

Calvin returned to Geneva with augmented honors; he was soon after elected pastor, and under this title was solemnly installed in the Church of St. Peter. His preaching was heard with loud expressions of satisfaction.

Farel and he drew up a confession of faith, "a brief formula of belief and doctrine," as Beza says, "to give some shape to the newly established church." Calvin wrote also a catechism, not at first in its later form of questions and answers, but consisting of "brief summaries of all the principal tenets of our religion."

This confession consists of twenty-one articles in which the chief doctrines of the reformed faith are clearly and simply stated, and that faith sharply discriminated from that of Rome. The doctrine of predestination is only implied, not stated, however. They teach briefly the principles of ecclesiastical organization, the duty of obeying civil "statutes and decrees which are not in opposition to the commandments of God." They establish "the punishment of excommunication, which" they "hold to be a sacred and salutary weapon in the hands of believers, so that the wicked by their evil conversation may not corrupt the good and dishonor Christ." They "hold that it is expedient and

* Quoted in Henry: *Life of Calvin,* Vol. I., p. 218.

according to the ordinance of God that all open idolaters, blasphemers, murderers, thieves, adulterers and false witnesses, all seditious and quarrelsome persons, slanderers, pugilists, drunkards and spendthrifts, if they do not amend their lives after they have been duly admonished, shall be cut off from communion with believers until they have given satisfactory proof of repentance."

During this period Calvin had engaged in disputes with Anabaptist intruders and had waged a controversy with the unprincipled theological adventurer, and turncoat, the vain and quarrelsome, the vagarious and unmanly Caroli, who accused the Genevese reformers of being Arians.

Such were Calvin's early labors in Geneva as a teacher. Meanwhile he had been trying to apply his principles of ecclesiastical government. Farel, Calvin and Corault had presented to the council a memorial concerning the future organization and discipline of the church. They had requested, in particular, the council to elect a certain number of citizens to act with the ministers in the application of discipline. They wished to bring the "power of God" as well as the truth of God to bear on the lives of the Genevese. Under their influence the Great Council of the Two Hundred, on January 16, 1537, issued a series of orders forbidding "immoral habits, foolish songs, gambling, desecration of the Lord's day, baptism by midwives," and directing that all idolatrous images should be burned.

They were not ready to sanction the power of excommunication, which the ministers wanted; but on the 29th of July, 1537, the Council of the Two Hundred ordered all the citizens, male and female, to give their assent to the confession of faith in the Church of St. Peter. A large number complied; many refused. In November, 1537, the council passed a measure that all who would not receive the confession should be banished—a decree that could never be carried into force.

There is much in this influence of the Genevan reformers that we have to condemn. Having freed the Genevese

from the bondage of Rome, they would reduce them by force to a bondage to their confession. They had failed to see that God alone is Lord of the conscience. They neither gave nor expected religious toleration; they did not regard it as right.

Calvin, in his practical work in Geneva, had had a threefold end in view, viz., the independence of the church of state control, the government of the church by itself enforced by penalties including that of excommunication from the sealing ordinances, the reform of society, both civil and religious, by the united powers of church and state.

In this practical aim of Calvin's was the complex occasion for struggle. The frivolous and libidinous people of Geneva were disinclined to moral reform. The state was disinclined to allow the autonomy of the church. It was unwilling for a long time to concede to the presbytery the right of excommunication. An harmonious alliance between church and state is a Utopian dream, impossible of realization; for how can two walk together except they be agreed?

Impatient of rigid discipline, the people set themselves against the council. In this opposition they were aided in part by Bern, which was opposed to the tenet of excommunication. The radicalism of Farel and Calvin was also displeasing to the people. Farel had early abolished all holidays except Sunday, the use of unleavened bread in the communion, and the baptismal fonts. Here, too, Bern supported the opponents of the Genevese reformers, being itself less radical in its reforms and having some political aspirations touching the acquisition of influence in Geneva.

In the February elections of 1538 the party of opposition elected the four syndics and a majority of the members of the Great Council. The new rulers moved with prudence. They instituted some measures furthering the work of reform; but they enforced the Bernese customs, and they did nothing to suppress the popular vices. The preachers

therefore thundered against them, with the result first of the banishment of Corault and later that of Farel and Calvin.

The exile of Calvin and Farel occurred as follows: They had been ordered to celebrate the Easter communion after the Bernese custom. They refused to do so, owing to the prevalent debauchery and disorder, and because they would not subordinate the authority of God to that of Bern. On Easter Sunday, April 21st, they preached, Calvin in St. Peter's and Farel in St. Gervais's, to large audiences; but declared that they could not administer the sacrament under the existing circumstances. Many of the hearers were armed; they drew their swords; they drowned with their shouts the voices of the preachers. The preachers left the churches under guard of their friends.

On the next two days the Council of the Two Hundred met in the cloisters of St. Peter's and deposed Calvin and Farel and bade them leave the city within three days.

Zurich made some kind efforts to secure their restoration; but the preachers, while ready to make minor concessions, insisted on the necessity of discipline and its exercise by a joint committee of ministers and laymen; and the Genevese confirmed the sentence of banishment May 26th. The exiles proceeded to Basle, whence Farel was soon called to Neuchâtel and Calvin a little later to Strasburg.

Calvin had received the news of his banishment with the noble words, "Very well, it is better to serve God than man. If we had sought to please men we should have been badly rewarded, but we serve a higher Master, who will not withhold from us his reward."

§ 15. *Calvin in Strasburg. Still the Head of the Genevan Church,* 1538–1541.

Having accepted an invitation to Strasburg, Calvin arrived at that city in the early days of September, 1538. He was cordially received by Bucer and the other leading re-

formers of the place. The council appointed him assistant professor of theology, in which capacity he lectured on the Gospel of John and the Epistle of Paul to the Romans to growing classes of admiring pupils. He was soon made pastor also of the Church of the "Strangers," his church consisting for the most part of French refugees. In this he attempted again, and this time with considerable success, to apply the discipline of the church for which he had been expelled from Geneva. He regarded discipline as of hardly less importance than doctrine. He gave to this church, too, a liturgy in proximate correspondence with New Testament teaching, and rejecting almost entirely Mediæval adjuncts. Philip Schaff nobly says of it: He substituted in the place of Mediæval worship "that simple and spiritual mode of worship which is well adapted for intelligent devotion, if it be animated by the quickening presence and power of the Spirit of God, but becomes jejune, barren, cold and chilly if that power is wanting. He made the sermon the central part of worship, and substituted instruction in the vernacular for the reading of the mass in Latin. He magnified the pulpit, as the throne of the preacher, above the altar of the sacrificing priest. He opened the inexhaustible fountain of free prayer in public worship, with its endless possibilities of application to varying circumstances and wants. He restored to the church like Luther the inestimable blessing of congregational singing, which is the true popular liturgy and more effective than the reading of written forms of prayer." * The rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper were entirely stripped of later adjuncts and performed in the gospel simplicity.

This liturgy became the model of that subsequently established in Geneva, though with modifications, and of those in the Reformed French Church and of British Presbyterianism. By the introduction of the Psalter in the vernacular, Calvin comforted and inspired the persecuted French Protestants in all later years.

* Schaff: *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. VII., p. 379.

But these years at Strasburg were filled not only with professional and pastoral work. Calvin here was prolific as an author. He sent forth in 1539 his matured theological views in a carefully revised edition of the "Institutes;" and in the same year his valuable commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. During this period he wrote also a French treatise on the Lord's Supper, and an overwhelming answer to Bishop Sadolet's letter to the Genevese.

Calvin also served, as at the colloquies of Frankfort, Worms and Regensberg, as a commissioner of Strasburg and the Dukes of Luneberg—of one or both. At these conferences, which were among German-speaking peoples, Calvin was at something of a disadvantage—an admired adviser rather than a public protagonist. Stahelin thus defines his position at these conferences, "The young Frenchman, with his reserved and rather shy manners, must have been a singular apparition among the princes and most eminent men of learning in the German empire amongst whom he was suddenly thrown. As they often spoke in German he did not always understand what was being discussed, and his position was rather that of a learned and reliable man whom his friends had summoned to give them valuable advice than that of one who took an active part in official debates." *

Calvin soon came to expect little good from the colloquies. He was not of the kind that compromises truth. Protestants and Romanists cannot come together except upon compromise or utter abandonment of position on the part of one party or the other. There is a radical antagonism between them. Calvin's presence furthered no sort of union between the two great wings of Christendom.

His presence in these colloquies and his exile in Strasburg, indeed, were productive of good in the formation of pure, noble and enduring friendships, the broadening of

* Stähelin: ———, Vol. I., p. 233. Quoted in Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* p. 240.

his understanding of the Lutheran and Zwinglian wings of Protestantism and the widening of his sympathies.

These friendships, especially that with Melanchthon, show that Calvin possessed a strong and fervid affectional nature, and that his friendships could easily bridge considerable chasms in the faith, provided only he believed in the genuine Christianity of the man. The expressions of affection of these two great men for each other, notwithstanding their theological differences, occurring in their correspondence, strike a man in our superficial age as too fervid; but they and much matter besides in Calvin's literary remains effectually overthrow the somewhat current view that Calvin was a man all head and no heart. He is shown to have been a man of inclusive and generous affections, which, however, were curbed and directed by the dominant affection of his being, viz., that for God his Saviour. These friendships lent a charm to his life, as did also his marriage, which took place in August, 1540.

The courtship of John Calvin strikes a man with a less high sense of duty and less devotion to God as unnatural. With Calvin God was first and all the world, including every woman, was second to that first love. His devotion to God was such that he would probably hardly have thought seriously of taking a wife had not his friends, out of consideration for his comfort and prolonged usefulness, urged him incessantly to do so. The exhortations of his friends, reinforced by his feelings of loneliness and his need of care, finally occasioned his seeking a help-meet. A help-meet was what he sought—one to aid him in his work for God, not a hindrance.

What he thought of his future wife and the view which he then took of marriage we may learn from his letter to Farel bearing the date of May 19, 1539, "Remember what I expect from one who is to be a companion through life. I do not belong to the class of loving fools, who, blinded by passion, are ready to expend their affection on vice itself. Do you wish to know what kind of beauty alone can win

my soul? It is that in which grace and virtue, contentedness and suavity are united with simplicity; and I can hope that a woman with these qualities would not be negligent of my general well-being." *

It amuses us that he was apparently willing to submit the choice of a wife for himself largely to his friends. After a good deal of prospecting on their part, he came to the conclusion that in Idelette de Bure, widow of John Störder, who had been one of Calvin's prominent converts from Anabaptism, a woman of education and dignity of character, he had found that cluster of qualities for which he looked in a wife, albeit her health was poor and she had several small children.

They were married with a good deal of public solemnity and pomp, and lived in increasing happiness for nine years, when, after a lingering illness, she was taken from his side. Calvin's wife was an exalted Christian. Calvin esteemed her as a woman and loved her as a wife.

His admiration, affection and devotion to his wife are often incidentally expressed or implied in his correspondence. The severity of grief upon her death is also nobly indicated in his letter to Viret, April 7, 1549. The letter runs as follows:

"Although my wife's death has pressed hard upon me, I seek as much as possible to conquer my sorrow, and my friends contend with each other to afford me consolation; but in truth neither their nor my efforts can accomplish what we wish. Useless, however, as it may be, it is a greater comfort to me than I can describe. You know the tenderness, or far rather ought I to say the weakness, of my heart, and you are well aware therefore that if I had not exercised the whole force of my spirit to soften my agony, I could not have borne it; and indeed the cause of my distress is not a trifling one. I am separated from the best of companions, who, if anything harder could have

* Quoted in Henry: *Life of John Calvin,* Vol. I., p. 264.

happened to me, would willingly have been my companion, not only in exile and in want, but in death itself. She was a true help to me in her life in the duties of my office. She never opposed me in the slightest matter. As she had no anxiety for herself, so through her whole sickness she avoided telling me that she had any for her children. But as I feared this silence might uselessly increase her care, I began myself, three days before her death, to speak on the subject, and promised to do for her children whatever lay in my power. She immediately answered that she had already commended them to God; and on my replying that this would not hinder my caring for them, she answered, 'I am sure you will not forsake the children who are commended to God.' But yesterday I learnt that when a friend requested her to speak with me respecting the children, she answered her briefly that the one thing necessary was that they should be God-fearing and pious people: 'It is not necessary to make my husband promise to bring them up in holiness and the fear of God. If they be pious he will be to them an unsought father; if they be not, they do not deserve that I should pray for them.' And this greatness of soul will indeed influence me more powerfully than all the directions she could have given." *

His family life no doubt helped Calvin to be a better pastor and gave reach to his sympathies. What could be sweeter in any man's letters than this reference to Viret's little girl in a letter to the father, "I sympathize with your little daughter; but she will forgive her mother when she has a sister or brother born to her. The weaning I hope is well over." The man that can pass from matters of importance to the griefs of a child as Calvin here does is quite human in the best sense. Both in his references to his own home life and in his intimations of the view which his

* Quoted in Henry: *Life of Calvin,* Vol. I., pp. 266, 267. *Cf.* Bounet: *Calvin's Letters,* Vol. II., pp. 216, 217, for a translation superior in some respects.

friends should take of wife and children we find ample evidence that Calvin, in commenting on Ephesians v. 28-33, was also writing out of his own heart. He says, "It is a thing against nature that any one should not love his wife, for God has ordained marriage that two may be made one person—a result which certainly no other alliance can bring about. When Moses says that a man shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, he shows that a man ought to prefer marriage to every other union, as being the holiest of all. It reflects our union to Christ."

From these attractive, but too little understood, features of Calvin's character and life we must return to the consideration of a part of his literary output while at Geneva, a work that showed that the exile was still the pastor of the Genevese—his answer to the overture of Bishop Sadolet.

The confusion consequent on Calvin's banishment from Geneva seemed to Rome the occasion for winning to herself the allegiance of Geneva. Sadolet, Bishop of Carpentras in Dauphiny, seemed to be the man for the enterprise. He was of highly respectable morals, amiable qualities of heart, and a man of letters. He had shown himself opposed to the bitterer forms of persecution employed by the Romanists against the Protestants. By reason of his character and history, therefore, he was particularly well fitted for the task of reconciling the Genevese. His letter to the Genevese was a sophistical, but plausible, plea wherefore the people of Geneva should abandon the new-fangled teachings and cult of the reformers and come back and walk again in the old path tried and "'approved of all everywhere and in all times." Dignified as his letter was, it basely aspersed, to the damage of the impression which the writer wished to make, the motives of the reformers.

The letter was in Latin and therefore did less damage than if it had been in French; but it did damage. There was no man in Geneva to answer it. The great pastor of the Genevese was in exile. He took up the cudgels there; his answer to Sadolet was exhaustive of the points made by

the amiable, but wily, ecclesiastic, an indignant, but tempered, vindication of his ministry as one called of God and not inspired by ambition or self-seeking. As a demolition of Sadolet's argument Calvin's reply was complete; but his reply was more than a demolition of his adversary's argument; it was an attack on Rome and her deviations from truth. Hear a part of his impeachment in his own words:

"I will not permit you, Sadolet, by inscribing the name of church on such abominations, both to defame her against all law and justice, and prejudice the ignorant against us, as if we were determined to wage war against the church; for, though we admit that in ancient times some seeds of superstition were sown, which detracted somewhat from the purity of the gospel, still you know that it is not so long ago since those monsters of impiety with which we war were born or, at least, grew to such a size. Indeed, in attacking, breaking down and destroying your kingdom we are armed not only with the energy of the divine word, but with the aid of the holy fathers also.

"That I may altogether disarm you of the authority of the church, which, as your shield of Ajax, you ever and anon oppose to us, I will show by some additional examples how widely you differ from that holy antiquity.

"We accuse you of overthrowing the ministry, of which the empty name remains with you without the reality. As far as the office of feeding the people is concerned, the very children perceive that bishops and presbyters are dumb statues, while men of all ranks know by experience that they are active only in robbing and devouring. We are indignant that in the room of the sacred supper has been substituted a sacrifice by which the death of Christ is emptied of its virtues. We exclaim against the execrable traffic in masses, and we complain that the supper of the Lord, as to one of its halves, has been stolen from the Christian people. We inveigh against the accursed worship of images. We show that the sacraments are vitiated by many profane notions. We tell how indulgences crept

in with fearful dishonor to the cross of Christ. We lament that by means of human traditions Christian liberty has been crushed and destroyed. Of these and similar pests we have been careful to purge the churches which the Lord has committed to us. Expostulate with us if you can for the injury which we inflicted on the Catholic Church by daring to violate its sacred sanctions. The fact is now too notorious for you to gain anything by denying it, viz., that in all these points the ancient church is clearly on our side, and opposes you not less than we ourselves do." *

Thus Calvin marches on charging and proving throughout one of the ablest and most successful, as well as most dignified, controversial papers of the time. Luther was delighted. He said of this paper, "This answer has hand and foot, and I rejoice that God raises up men who will give the last blow to popery and finish the war against Anti-Christ which I began." † The answer gave great satisfaction to all but the most hostile at Geneva. It made Calvin precious to all the friends of freedom. It gave new proof that he was fit to be the pastor of the city.

Meanwhile, and during the following months, Geneva was falling into more and more of disorder. Discipline was *nil* and immorality ran riot. The political freedom of the country was in danger. Bern, outwitting the Genevese commission, acquired treaty sovereignty, which the Great Council would not acknowledge.

The Genevese themselves were divided into three parties, the Bernese, Roman Catholic parties and Reformers. The Bernese party was decimated by political execution. Both that party and the Roman Catholic made blunders. The party of the Reformers began again to grow in relative power and numbers.

Thus the way was prepared for the recall of Calvin. This was discussed in the council early in 1539, again in

* Calvin's *Tracts,* Vol. I., pp. 49, 50.

† Schaff: Vol. VII., p. 412.

February, 1540, and decided upon September 21, 1540. From that time on increasingly earnest measures were taken to get him. The syndics' letter bearing date of October 22d concludes, "On behalf of our Little, Great and General Councils (all of which have strongly urged us to take this step), we pray you very affectionately that you will be pleased to come over to us, and to return to your former post and ministry; and we hope that by God's help this course will be a great advantage for the furtherance of the holy gospel, seeing that our people very much desire you, and we will so deal with you that you shall have reason to be satisfied." * The seal of the letter bore the legend, "After darkness I hope for light."

Calvin loved Geneva, but had borne bitter experiences there. He knew that Titanic struggles awaited him should he return. The theologians at Strasburg contended that his place was there at the head of the French Church and a teacher of theology in the seminary. After a time both Calvin and his friends, however, swung around to the conclusion that his place was in Geneva. He yearned over Geneva while he dreaded to return. "There is no place under heaven," he writes to Viret, "of which I can have a greater dread, not because I have hated it, but because I see so many difficulties presented in that quarter which I do feel myself far from being able to surmount." † But he remembered that in this matter he was not his own master. He presented his heart as a sacrifice and offered it up to God. He returned to Geneva in early September, 1541.

* Quoted in Schaff: *History of the Christian Church,* Vol. VII., p. 431.

† *Calvin's Letters,* Vol. I., p. 231.

CHAPTER IV.

The Period of His Establishment, and Defence of as Scriptural, of an Order of Ecclesiastical Government, Corresponding to His System of Faith, Which is Known as Presbyterianism, 1541–1549.

§ 16. *Calvin's Labors in this Period.*

Upon Calvin's return to Geneva he entered into labors more abundant. He was professor of theology, preacher, pastor, member of the church court, head of schools, author, correspondent with all Protestant Europe, head of the Reformation movement, fighting controversies on every side in behalf of the truth—the protagonist of Protestantism against the papacy and the protagonist of biblical Protestantism against the rationalists. Beza says of "the ordinary labors" of Calvin at this time, "During the week he preached every alternate and lectured every third day; on Thursday he presided in the meetings of presbytery (consistory), and on Friday he attended the ordinary scripture meeting called the congregation, where he had his full share of duty. He also wrote most learned commentaries on several of the books of scripture, besides answering the enemies of religion, and maintaining an extensive correspondence on matters of great importance. Any one who reads these attentively will be astonished how one man could be fit for labors so numerous and great." * He was a preëminently laborious and faithful man in every one of his church relations. It may touch a sympathetic chord in the breasts of some of our city workers to learn that Calvin "proposed the establishment of 'clubs open only to

* Beza: *Life of Calvin,* in Calvin's Tracts, Vol. I., p. xxxix.

members of the association, in which young men and fathers of families could meet and discuss matters relating to the war and other things useful to the commonwealth,' " * and that four such clubs were established. Thus this busy man took measures to break up the resort to taverns.

Nor is this all. He was appointed, together with three of the syndics of Geneva, in 1541 to draw up a new code of laws for Geneva. He went into this work with his usual energy and faithfulness, giving attention to the "minutest details concerning the administration of justice, the city police, the military, the firemen, the watchmen on the towers and the like." †

His advice was sought on all important affairs of state, although he was not a citizen of Geneva until 1559, which was eighteen years after his second return to the city. He was the moral head of Reformed Geneva—of state as well as church, though he never held a civil office and was never a member of a council and never appeared before one of the councils except when asked, or when some religious question was being debated.

That part of his labors which cost him most of trials in this period and was most important to the city of Geneva was the introduction of his form of ecclesiastical government. To this he gave himself at once on his return.

§ 17. *Distinctive Principles of Calvin's Ecclesiastical Polity.*

On his arrival in Geneva Calvin had no sooner paid his respects to the magistrates than he requested them at once to appoint a commission to draw up an ecclesiastical constitution and discipline in accord with the word of God and the primitive church.

A fortnight later this commission had drawn up "a hun-

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* p. 266.

† Schaff: Vol. VII., p. 464.

dred and sixty-eight" articles which contained a complete scheme of church government. This scheme was presented to the council on the 26th of September, 1541. It suffered modifications prior to its adoption by the several councils. Finally on the 2d of January, 1542, "the ecclesiastical ordinances were accepted by the General Assembly, consisting of 2,000 citizens;" * so that Calvin could write as he did March 14, 1542, "We at length possess a presbyterial court such as it is, and a form of discipline such as these disjointed times will permit." † He had won so much only by the greatest tact, wisdom and persistence.

The distinctive principles of this system of government were—

1. The self-government of the church under the headship of Christ.

2. Ecclesiastical discipline of all the members of the church from the greatest to the smallest to be exercised by a parliamentary court consisting of ministers of the gospel and ruling elders.

3. A consistory, or parliamentary court, consisting of elders of two classes, to exercise this discipline.

4. The recognition and reinstitution of the New Testament ruling eldership.

Even in a sketch such as this these principles of church polity deserve more particular illustration:

1. Calvin distinguished sharply between church and state, but he saw no propriety in their separation; held that they were independent of one another each in its own domain; but that they ought in action to combine and mutually support one another. He held to the duty of the church to maintain relations of absolute independence and separation from the state only when it is necessary in order to her own self-government. He believed that God in Christ is head of both church and state. Here lay one of his mistakes.

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin*, p. 239.

† *Calvin's Letters*, Vol. I., p. 316.

God, viewed as Creator and moral Governor of the universe, is head of the state. God, viewed as Redeemer also, is head of the church. Calvin thought every state ought to acknowledge Christ as its head. This was the conception of his age. He was not able to shake it off. Hence not unnaturally he thought that two such institutions under one divine head ought to be in alliance here below.

The logic of such a position is persecution by the state on the grounds of religious heresy. If the state has any right to profess Christ as its head and to propagate his religion, then it must vindicate the laws of Christ; it must punish heresy with the forces at its command. Thus naturally we shall find the Genevan state punishing with fine, banishment and death such men as Gruet, Bolsec and Servetus. God never gave the state as such the right to profess Christianity or to push it.

Calvin was wrong in holding that the state could properly be Christian in any such sense; it was a common error of his age. He was wrong in holding the propriety of a union between church and state, and thus making the state profess and enforce the laws of both tables of the Decalogue. He tended, however, in this false union of church and state to make the church the superior member of the alliance.

He was right in contending for the autonomy of the church—her free self-government, even at the cost of breaking the alliance of church and state and the church's entire support of herself. This was no small service to Protestant Christendom wherein generally too much power, in the rebound from papal tyranny, had been given to the temporal princes.

2. Calvin valued discipline as second only to teaching. The effort to introduce discipline had been the primary occasion of his expulsion from Geneva. He introduced it successfully in the French congregation at Strasburg. The need of it was one reason for his recall to Geneva. It is one of the greatest factors in his influence to this day.

This stern discipline, based on his noble creed, has formed the heroic French, Dutch, English, Scotch-Irish and American and Australian Puritans to this day.

Calvin proposed to realize, so far as possible, the ideal of the "church without spot or wrinkle," which Paul sets forth in the Epistle to the Ephesians v. 27. He sought the glorification of God by the dominion of his word in the life of Christians. In his doctrine of the church he provided for the application in the church of the power of Christ as well as the teaching of Christ. He knew, however, that the ideal of a perfect church could only be imperfectly realized. He teaches, as in his commentary on Matthew xiii. 47, that " the church while on earth is mixed with good and bad and will never be free from all impurity. . . . Although God, who is a God of order, commands us to exercise discipline, he allows for a time to hypocrites a place among believers until he shall set up his kingdom in perfection on the last day. As far as we are concerned, we must strive to correct vices and to purge the church of impurity, although she will not be free from all stain and blemish till Christ shall separate the sheep from the goats."

The importance of discipline Calvin formally sets forth in his introduction to the discussion of "The Discipline of the Church" contained in the "Institutes," Book IV., Chapter xii. He says, "As some have such a hatred of discipline as to abhor the very name, they should attend to the following consideration: that if no society and even no house, though containing only a small family, can be preserved in a proper state without discipline, this is far more necessary in the church, the state of which ought to be the most orderly of all. As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so discipline forms the ligaments which connect the members together and keep each in its proper place. . . . Discipline, therefore, serves as a bridle to curb and restrain the refractory who resist the doctrine of Christ, or as a spur to stimulate the inactive, and sometimes as a father's rod with which those who have grievously fallen

may be chastised in mercy and with the gentleness of the spirit of Christ. Now, when we see the approach of certain beginnings of a dreadful desolation in the church, since there is no solicitude or means to keep the people in obedience to our Lord, necessity itself proclaims the want of a remedy; and this is the only remedy which has been commanded by Christ or which has ever been adopted among believers." *

In accordance with the teaching of Christ, Calvin made three degrees of discipline, viz., private admonition, admonition in the presence of witnesses or before the church, and excommunication. Excommunication is to be employed only "for the correcting of atrocious crimes," such as "adultery, fornication, theft, robbery, sedition, perjury, false witness, and other similar crimes, together with obstinate persons, who after having been admonished even of smaller faults, contemn God and his judgment." Admonition in the presence of witnesses is to be employed against "public offences" of less heinousness and against private offences of inferior sort, when private admonition has failed. Private admonition is to be employed universally whenever occasion shall require. "Pastors and presbyters, beyond all others, should be vigilant in the discharge of this duty, being called by their office, not only to preach to the congregation, but also to admonish and exhort in private houses, if in any instances their public instructions may not have been sufficiently efficacious, as Paul inculcates when he says that he 'taught publicly and from house to house,' and protests himself to be 'pure from the blood of all men,' having 'ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.'" †

The ends of discipline are, "First, that those who lead scandalous and flagitious lives may not, to the dishonor of

* *Institutes.* Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, 1841.

† *Institutes,* Vol. II., pp. 411, 412.

God, be numbered among Christians. . . . For as the church is the body of Christ, it cannot be contaminated with such foul and putrid members without some ignominy being reflected upon the Head." "The second end is, that the good may not be corrupted, as is often the case, by constant association with the wicked; for such is our propensity to error, nothing is more easy than for evil examples to seduce us from rectitude of conduct." "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." "The third end is, that those who are censured or excommunicated, confounded with the shame of their turpitude, may be led to repentance."

On no point does Calvin lay more emphasis than that discipline of every degree is to be administered only "with a spirit of gentleness." "For there is constant need of the greatest caution, according to the injunction of Paul, respecting a person who may have been censured, 'lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow;' for thus a remedy would become a poison; but the rule of moderation may be better deduced from the end intended to be accomplished; for as the design of excommunication is that the sinner may be brought to repentance, and evil examples taken away, to prevent the name of Christ from being blasphemed and other persons tempted to imitation; if we keep these things in view, it will be easy to judge how far severity ought to proceed and where it ought to stop." * He inculcates earnestly the duty of trying to win to a holy life the excommunicated. He made it the church's duty to receive into communion again, on his repentance, one who had been excommunicated; and this also though the repentance were after a second excommunication. "Such," he says, "as are expelled from the church, therefore, it is not for us to expunge from the number of the elect, or to despair of them as already lost. It is proper to consider them as strangers to the church,

* Calvin: *Institutes,* Vol. II., pp. 415, 416.

and consequently from Christ, but this only as long as they remain in a state of exclusion." *

Anathema, or the devotion of a person to eternal perdition, he thought, ought never be resorted to, or, at least, very rarely.

Calvin would make the discipline of the ministers of the gospel only more rigid than that of the people. As ensamples to the flock they were under special obligations to live an approvable life. Against the Romish Church he vindicated the minister's right to marriage, on the one hand, and on the other denied his right to exemption from the civil courts, and taught that they should be afflicted with the same punishments as laymen for misdemeanors.

Little just criticism can be passed against Calvin's views of the importance of discipline, its proper ends, and as to the spirit with which it should be exercised. Owing to the unhappy union of church and state which all Calvin's age believed in, he was not so happy in locating the power of discipline; but this brings us to the third distinctive feature of his polity.

3. Church discipline should be exercised by a presbytery (consistory), consisting of elders of two classes—ministers of the gospel and ruling elders.

This is a correct, biblical principle in cases where the officers are duly elected by the church members in full communion; but in Geneva, owing to the union of church and state, this presbytery (consistory) embraced, in the time of Calvin, five city pastors and twelve elders, selected two from the Lesser Council and ten from the Council of Sixty, or that of Two Hundred. The elders were chosen by the Lesser Council, but confirmed by the preachers. The preachers were always elected first by the body of preachers already in existence; but their election had to be further confirmed by approval on the part of the Lesser Council. Lastly, if the congregation had anything to ob-

* Calvin: *Institutes,* Vol. II., pp. 417, 418.

ject it was made its duty to state its objection to the syndics that all might be satisfied with the choice.

Thus it appears that the state, as such, had a good deal to do with the appointment of the members of the consistory.

This came of the state's having the church as its church. The court of the church was really the state's court to attend to its church's business. "This consistory was never to assume any of the rights of civil power. If the infliction of [corporal] punishment seemed necessary to it, it was to lay the circumstance before the government, it belonging unto God to determine the powers of both." *

This presbytery was the controlling power in the *church* of Geneva. Its severest punishment was that of excommunication. The council was disposed to deny the consistory this right; and it only granted the undisputed power of excommunication after the year 1555. Before that, excommunicated persons were ever appealing to the council.

Confused readers often malign the consistory of the Genevan Church, confusing it with the council—the Little Council—a civil organ which condemned Gruet, Bolsec and Servetus, whose names "do not even appear in the records" † of the consistory.

The formal president of the consistory was one of the syndics. Calvin exercised a controlling influence in its decisions, but only by his moral and intellectual weight.

A sort of subsidiary organ of ecclesiastical rule was the *Venerable Company,* which consisted of all the ministers of the city and district of Geneva. It took the general supervision of all strictly ecclesiastical affairs, especially education, ordination and installation of ministers of the gospel; but, as we have seen, no one could be admitted to the ministry and installed without the coöperation of the civil government and the assent of the people.

* Henry: *Life of Calvin,* p. 386.

† Schaff: Vol. VII., p. 482.

The great fault with the application of this feature of Calvin's policy in Geneva was that the communicants had too little power in the choice of the rulers; that the state had any power in the case, and that the consistory recognized that it was in some sense an instrument of state.

Had Calvin but gotten rid of the idea of the propriety of the union between church and state, or had he been forced to separate the church from the state, he would have deserved unqualified approval for resurrecting the biblical organ of church government—a presbytery composed of elders of two classes, elders who both rule and teach, and elders who rule only.

Calvin saw clearly that in the New Testament the bishop is an elder and the elder a bishop. He, therefore, in common with the reformers generally taught the parity of the ministry; but he saw also that among these New Testament officers, called indifferently elders or bishops, there were two classes. Thus we come to the fourth distinctive principle of Calvinism.

4. The recognition and reinstitution of the New Testament ruling eldership. Commenting on Romans xii. 8 and 1 Corinthians xii. 28, Calvin says, "'Governors' I apprehend to have been persons of advanced years, selected from the people, to unite with the bishops in giving admonitions and exercising discipline. For no other interpretation can be given of that injunction, 'He that ruleth, let him do it with diligence.' Therefore, from the beginning, every church has had its senate or council, composed of pious, grave and holy men, who were invested with that jurisdiction in the correction of vices, of which we shall soon treat. Now, that this regulation was not of a single age, experience itself demonstrates. This office of government is necessary, therefore, in every age." *

Presbyterians to-day may see the New Testament ruling elder more accurately. They may prove his existence and

* Calvin: *Institutes,* Book IV., Chap. iii., Sec. 8.

prerogatives more conclusively; but Calvin deserves credit for having discerned the officer more clearly than any other man of his time.

It may be noted also, in passing, that Calvin reinstituted the New Testament office of the deacon. They were elected in the same manner as the elders. They were of two kinds, first, those who were to administer the alms regularly collected, and, second, those who were to take care of the sick and to provide food for the poor.

§ 18. *Calvin's Struggle with the Patriots and Libertines in Behalf of Discipline.*

Calvin infused the spirit of Puritanism by degrees into the church and state of Geneva; so that "dancing, gambling, drunkenness, the frequentation of taverns, profanity, luxury, excesses at public entertainments, extravagance and immodesty in dress, licentious or irreligious songs, were forbidden, punished by censure or fine or imprisonment;" * and so that the reading of immoral books and bad novels was prohibited. Heresy, idolatry and blasphemy and adultery after the second offence were punished by the state of Geneva with the death penalty.

Even the strictly ecclesiastical discipline introduced by Calvin was perhaps too rigid, though it helped to make Geneva the greatest school of Christ on earth. The endeavor on the part of the state to discipline for ecclesiastical offences was an usurpation and a deprivation of religious liberty—a thing to be forever deplored, though a thing found in Calvin's day in every Protestant and Roman Catholic country under the sun. It must be admitted that Calvin inspired state as well as church with his spirit, though at times they went beyond him—became more rigid and stern than he was.

It was some time before the state came into full sympathy with his system. For years there were struggles be-

* Schaff: Vol. VII., pp. 489, 490.

tween the consistory, or the Venerable Company, and the council, the council espousing the cause of lax discipline. The party of stern discipline, therefore, in their efforts at discipline during the first ten years often found themselves withstood by the council. Individuals knowing of this difference of the powers were bolder and more contemptuous; and at least two considerable parties maintained a bitter conflict with Calvin for years.

These were the Patriots and the Libertines:

1. The Patriots, or Children of Geneva, as they called themselves, included many of the oldest Genevese families, Fabri Ameaux, Perrin, Berthelier and Vandel. They had helped to win the freedom of Geneva. They had even helped to introduce the Reformation as a sort of bulwark against their old enemies; but they were wild, wayward, licentious folk, impatient of all law and restraint. They desired not freedom, but license. They hated Calvin's discipline. They were furious at the thought of the city's coming under the control of his party. His party was growing. Refugees from all quarters of Europe, especially from France, were flocking to him—men who had left home and property for religion. They were ready to become citizens of the city in which Calvin ministered. They strengthened his power. The Patriots succeeded at one time in prohibiting the carrying of arms by the refugees and their admission to citizenship. This, however, was only a temporary victory. The refugees were of that very stuff of which good citizens were made. They were admitted in great numbers to citizenship, at times when the government was favorable.

2. The Libertines, or Spiritualists, as they called themselves, were the bitterest opponents of Calvin's system of discipline.

They were pantheists and antinomians. They said, "What I do God does." "What God does we do, for he is in us." Sin is a mere phantasy or illusion. It ceases to be as soon as we get rid of the notion that it exists. They in-

dulged in the grossest licentiousness. The wife of Ameaux justified her licentiousness by the doctrine of the communion of saints. They taught that legal marriage is carnal and not binding. They magnified spiritual marriage. They parodied the gospel, blasphemed God and Christ, were, in short, moral swine, cheats and liars.

These parties were constant thorns in Calvin's side, prodding him on every turn. They, singly or in union, availed themselves of every adverse turn in the relations of the consistory to the Civil Council, *i. e.,* of every adverse turn in Calvin's relation to the council.

In reference to the struggle between himself and these parties he says in the preface to his commentary on the Psalms (1557), "If I should describe the course of my struggles by which the Lord has exercised me from this period, it would make a long story, but a brief reference may suffice. It affords me no slight consolation that David preceded me in these conflicts; for as the Philistines and other foreign foes vexed this holy king by continual wars, and as wickedness and treachery of the faithless of his own house grieved him still more, so was I on all sides assailed, and had scarcely a moment's rest from outward or inward struggles; but when Satan had made so many efforts to destroy our church, it came at length to this, that I, unwarlike and timid as I am, found myself compelled to oppose my own body to the murderous assault and to ward it off. Five years long had we to struggle without ceasing for the upholding of discipline; for these evil-doers were endowed with too great a degree of power to be easily overcome; and a portion of the people, perverted by their means, wished only for an unbridled freedom. To such worthless men, despisers of the holy law, the ruin of the church was a matter of utter indifference, could they but obtain the liberty to do whatever they desired. Many were induced by necessity and hunger, some by ambition or by a shameful desire of gain, to attempt a general overthrow, and to risk their own ruin as well as ours rather than be subject to the laws. Scarcely a single thing, I believe, was left unat-

tempted by them during this long period which we might not suppose to have been prepared in the workshop of Satan. Their wretched design could only be attended with a shameful disappointment. A melancholy drama was thus presented to me; for much as they deserved all possible punishment, I should have been rejoiced to see them passing their lives in peace and respectability, which might have been the case had they not wholly rejected every kind of prudent admonition."

Calvin is not the man to magnify his own experiences. Our limits do not allow us to follow him in these struggles, to see the contumely and insult heaped upon him on his way to his lecture-room, to hear shots fired before his bedroom door, to hear him called Cain, to hear the dogs called after him, to see him threatened in the pulpit, to see the men with a vow on them to throw him in the Rhone; but we shall take the liberty of re-presenting one incident in this struggle, and, as we shall not take this side of his history up in the next period, we shall go beyond the year 1549 to that of 1553 for this incident.

In the year 1553, the old struggle between the consistory and the council was being gone over again—the struggle as to which should exercise the right of excommunication. The Libertines availed themselves of this disagreement between the council and the consistory. "They ranged themselves on the side of the council, and Berthelier, one of their most violent partisans—a man whose unbelief and immorality were known to all—presented himself at the Lord's Supper, and was excommunicated by the consistory. He complained to the council, which declared it would not ratify the sentence, and that 'if Berthelier had no impediment in his own conscience which hindered him from approaching the table of the Lord, the council authorized him to do so.' 'Gentlemen,' said Calvin, 'as for me I would rather suffer death than allow the table of my Lord to be profaned in such a manner.' " *

* Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin*, p. 280.

The council knew Calvin. It was overawed. It sent word to Berthelier to stay away for the present if he could; but Berthelier and his friends wished to provoke an open rupture. On Sunday, the 3d of September, 1553, the Libertines were present in St. Peter's in large numbers and thronged the benches near the communion table. Calvin ascended the pulpit and preached on the state of mind and heart proper in those who would approach the Lord's table. He concluded his sermon with these words:

"As for me, so long as it shall please God to keep me here, since he has given me resolution and I have derived it from him, I shall not fail to exercise it when there is need; and I will rule my life in accordance with the will of my Master, which is quite clear and well known to me. . . . We are now about to receive the holy sacrament, and if any one who has been excommunicated by the consistory tries to approach that table, at the risk of my life I am prepared to do my duty." *

He came down from the pulpit and blessed the elements. Several of the Libertines made a movement as if to seize the bread and wine. Calvin spread his hands over them and cried, "You may break these limbs, you may cut off my arms, you may take my life! Shed my blood if you will; it is yours! but never shall one compel me to give things that are sacred to the profane and to dishonor the table of my God."

The Libertines were not prepared for action so decided. They glanced at one another. They heard a murmur from the congregation which threatened danger, they hesitated and drew back from the table. The agitated throng of believers then partook of the sacramental elements in silence.

In the afternoon of the same day Calvin preached again. He said:

"I do not know if this is not the last sermon I shall ever preach in Geneva; not that I leave by my own wish or that

* Quoted in Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin*, p. 281.

I desire to depart from this spot and to give up the authority which I hold; but I take that which has been done to signify that Geneva will receive my services no longer, and will seek to compel me to do what God does not permit. So long as I am free to preach and to serve you I will do it in the name of the Lord; but if I am forced into an intolerable position, I will not resist the constituted authorities and I must go." *

His conduct had been determined. His language is guarded. He showed himself respectful of authority; but claimed the right of acting in accord with the dictates of his own conscience. Geneva had tried the experiment of getting on without Calvin before. The Libertines even drew back. The magistrates hesitated and dared not carry out their decision. Debates as to where the power of excommunication ought to be lodged, whether with the consistory or the council, continued for two years. In 1555 the councils of Geneva agreed that the power belonged of right to the consistory.

We remember that the period of this struggle over discipline was one prolific of books. We wonder that in the midst of commotions as numerous, continued and great as those experienced by any political agitator, Calvin showed all his stupendous power for calm, unruffled, penetrating and profound thought. We see some evidence in the cause of our wonder, however, that through all these struggles Calvin maintained a consciousness of rectitude, a consciousness of his fighting the Lord's battles. One element of strength with him was the belief of his enemies in this consciousness of duty on Calvin's part. The majesty of his character helped to overawe them.

§ 19. *The Death of His Wife in* 1549.

We have had occasion to speak of the circumstances of Mrs. Calvin's death in another connection. We take up

* Quoted in Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* pp. 281, 282.

the subject here to speak more particularly of the effect of her death on Calvin. Bungener says:

"The remembrance of her whom he had lost was never effaced from his heart; though still young, he never formed other ties, and never pronounced the name of Idelette but with profound regard for her virtues and with tender respect for her memory.

"Never was homage more legitimate, never regrets more deserved. In losing Idelette de Bure, Calvin not only lost the companion of his ministry and life, he also lost a virtue. If the mission of the Christian woman is to console and bless, to remind men of the rights of charity—too much neglected in the ages of revolution—none were worthier than Idelette to carry out this mission at the reformer's side. Often sick and morose and soured by the resistance of men and things which bend but slowly to the designs of genius, Calvin lost too early those domestic affections for which he was so well calculated and of which he experienced the salutary influence only for nine years. Many a time doubtless during those years of heroic conflict and of secret despondency, of which his correspondence reproduces the phases, he regained his calmness by the side of the courageous and gentle woman who made no compromise with duty. Many a time, perhaps, he was tempered and softened by one of those words which come from the heart and of which woman possesses the secret! And when at length, in gloomier days, the controversies of opinions commingled with the shock of parties, raised up Bolsec, Servetus and Gentilis, who can say how much the reformer was in want of the counsels and kindly influence of Idelette de Bure?" *

Bungener probably overstates her influence; but it was great. Calvin was lonely the rest of his life, and not cared for as he ought to have been.

Soon after the death of his wife he began those efforts in behalf of the union of the Protestant world which characterized the last period of his own life.

* Bungener: *Life of Calvin,* pp. 233, 234.

CHAPTER V.

The Period of Calvin's Great Controversies Waged with the Purpose of Advancing Union Among Bodies of Evangelical Christians and Maintaining the Truths of His System, 1549–1564.

§ 20. *Calvin's Labors and Achievements,* 1549–1564.

Calvin's labors during this period were in considerable part controversial and polemical, but with the double end of the conservation of the truth and the union of all Protestant bodies. He sent forth many works, indeed, of a positive and constructive sort. In 1559 he completed the last edition of the "Institutes." "In 1549," we have from his pen or tongue, commentaries on "the Epistle to Titus, and that to the Hebrews; in 1550, the Epistle of St. James, and the two to the Thessalonians; in 1551, the Epistles of St. John and St. Jude, and a new edition of all St. Paul's Epistles; in 1552, the Acts; in 1553, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, which were arranged as a harmony and supplied with a parallel commentary, followed by a commentary on St. John;" * in 1551, a commentary on Isaiah; in 1554, a commentary on Genesis. Afterwards came, in 1557, the Psalms, and the same year the Prophet Hosea; in 1559, the twelve minor prophets; in 1561, Daniel; in 1563, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, and in 1564, Joshua.† Several and extended series of sermons appeared between 1552 and 1564. In 1550 a treatise on Eternal Predestination and Providence of God, and another on The Christian Life appeared, and many other

* Bungener: *Life of Calvin,* p. 282.

† Bungener: *Life of Calvin,* p. 326.

works in the course of the period of which space fails us to tell. He was also influencing as before the civil and industrial life of Geneva. Not a law was passed without the consultation of Mr. Calvin. No new business enterprise was permitted without Mr. Calvin's advice. Robert Stephens consults Mr. Calvin on printing and receives help. The council asks Mr. Calvin to be present at the examination of a surgeon who will practice in Geneva. A dentist, with the new art of repairing and preserving the teeth will ply his new art in Geneva. He is sent to Mr. Calvin. Calvin puts himself into the hands of the dentist, approves his work, and recommends him to the magistrates.*

Calvin's labors as the head of the Reformation movement in Western Christendom entailed on him at this time vast expenditure of energy. Luther was dead. Calvin was the only great leader living. He made it his business to further the movement in Great Britain, Poland, Holland, all Switzerland, South Germany, and especially in France. He wrote long letters to Somerset and did much to forward reform in the kingdom of the young Edward; corresponded with the king of Poland in the interest of reform there, directed the movement in France, sending hosts of preachers and giving them a form of polity and a confession. In 1559 he founded the Academy and College of Geneva.

But over and above these pacific labors Calvin poured himself out in efforts for the union of Protestantism. These efforts at times took irenical forms, but at other times assumed that of polemics. No man longed more for the union of the Protestant world than John Calvin; but he desired union on the basis of the truth. Hence in part his intense animosity toward radical error. There were two inspiring causes of his hatred of error: error took the place of truth and Calvin loved truth, and error rent the body of

* Bungener: *Life of Calvin,* p. 330.

Christ, the church, and so dishonored the Redeemer God, and Calvin loved God with all his heart.

This was the period of his great controversies against errors in Protestantism. The period was ushered in by his struggle in behalf of church union resulting in the agreement with the Zurichers. In it occurred the first great controversy—that concerning predestination—with Bolsec, and the second great controversy—on the Trinity—1553, with Servetus. Then followed smaller controversies on the Trinity with Matthaeus Gribaldi, Blandrata, Gentilis and others. During this period also (1556 and following) occurred the controversies with Westphal and Hesshus on the doctrine of the sacrament. In the course of these years also, as has been shown, the final struggle with the Libertines took place.

In the remaining portion of this sketch we shall describe briefly the Zurich Confession as an example of Calvin's irenical work. We shall sketch the controversy with Servetus to illustrate Calvin's temper in this part of his labors, than which no more difficult illustration can be taken; and we shall finally attempt an estimate of his character.

§ 21. *The Agreement with the Zurichers on the Lord's Supper; an Instance of Calvin's Irenical Efforts.*

Luther had reopened the sacramental controversy again in the year 1545 by an attack on the Zwinglians. They had defended themselves by a sharp reply. Calvin was displeased with both parties. He entered into correspondence on the subject with Bullinger, and on Bullinger's invitation he, together with Farel, went to Zurich in May, 1549. Both parties went into the work of forming a creed with an admirable spirit of frankness and forbearance. They produced the so-called "Consensus Tigurinus," in which the view of Calvin and the developed view of Zwingli are stated in harmony, so far as stated at all. The "Consensus" was published in 1551. It was adopted by all the reformed cantons except Bern. It passed into the reformed confes-

sions, and remains to this day the confessional statement of the Reformed Churches. Dr. Schaff says, "In practice, however, it has among Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists largely given way to the Zwinglian view, which is more plain and intelligible, but ignores the mystical element in the holy communion." *

To us Calvin's view seems to have differed from that taught by our own Dr. Dabney only by magnifying the work of the Holy Spirit in communion and bringing the sacrament into more prominent connection with our ingrafting into Christ. Not that Dabney makes nothing of these, but that Calvin made more.

Calvin's view of the mystical union between Christ and the believer was a very high one. He loved to dwell on those scriptures which set forth the believer's relation to Christ, "We are members of his body, his flesh and his bones." "I am the vine, ye are the branches," etc. Calvin held that this union is produced by the Holy Spirit with whom Christ baptizes, the Holy Spirit using as his instruments the word and sacraments. Calvin did not explain this union. He teaches that Paul himself wondered at rather than explained it. †

Calvin's view of the mystical union has often been misrepresented as a kind of Christo-Pantheism, involving a transfusion of the substance of Christ into the believer. But Calvin was no pantheist. No man was farther from it. Moreover, more than once he distinctly repudiates the idea of transfusion of substance. For example, both in the "Consensus Tigurinus" and in the exposition of it. In the "Exposition" he says, "But here again, as the minds of men always conceive grossly of the heavenly mysteries of God, it was necessary to obviate delirious dreams. With this view we laid down the definition that what we say of the partaking of Christ's flesh must not be understood as

* Schaff: Vol. VII., p. 593.

† Calvin: *Institutes,* Book IV., Chap. xvii., Secs. 7, ff.

if any commingling or transfusion of substance took place, but that we draw life from the flesh once offered in sacrifice. If any one is displeased with this explanation, I say, first, that he has some fiction of his own brain which is nowhere taught in scripture, and by no means accords with the analogy of faith; and I say, second, that it is too presumptuous, after taking up a meaning at random, to lay down the law to others. If they insist that the substance of the flesh of Christ is commingled with the soul of man in how many absurdities will they involve themselves?" . . . "We acknowledge that the sacred union which we have with Christ is incomprehensible to carnal sense. His joining us with him so as not only to instill his life into us, but to make us one with himself, we grant to be a mystery too sublime for our comprehension, except in so far as his words reveal it; but are we therefore to dream that his substance is transferred into us or that he is defiled by our impurities?" *

We might collect a world of proofs. Calvin was no pantheist either in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper or of the mystical union. He occasionally used figures which might be unduly pressed contrary to his meaning, but in this he had inspired precedent. His figures were good for his purpose to set forth the closeness and intimacy of the relationship between Christ and the believer. He frankly and humbly confessed his inability to comprehend this union. He contemned, in the most outspoken way, any pantheistic explanation as to the mode.

Calvin's notion of the mystical union and his notion that the sacrament is an instrumentality of the Spirit in increasing the union gave him a sympathy with the Lutheran denials that the sacraments should be regarded as mere external marks of profession and not also badges and symbols of divine grace; that they are mere empty symbols, and that God does not truly testify in them what he figures,

* *Calvin's Tracts,* Vol. II., p. 239.

and by his secret agency perform and fulfill what he testifies.*

Luther had misunderstood the Zwinglian view, and declaimed against it as though Zwingli saw in the sacraments external marks of profession and empty symbols merely. Zwingli's exhibition of the Lord's Supper had been inadequate at first, but it had grown to be something like the true view in his own life time, as is clear from his Confession sent to Francis I. shortly before his death.

In 1549 Calvin, perceiving the essential correctness of the contemporary Zurich or Zwinglian view, and yet sympathizing with Luther's war on the bare earlier view as he understood it, and remaining true to what had been distinctive in his own view of the sacrament—the emphasis of the union in the communion between the believer and Christ effected by the Spirit—wrote the "Consensus Tigurinus," or Zurich Confession, which has become the formal creed of the Reformed Churches.

It is of such general interest and intrinsic importance that we incorporate it entire without apology.

THE "CONSENSUS TIGURINUS." WRITTEN BY CALVIN IN 1549 FOR THE PURPOSE OF UNITING ALL BRANCHES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN A COMMON DOCTRINE AS TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

HEADS OF AGREEMENT.

1. *The Whole Spiritual Government of the Church Leads us to Christ.*

Seeing that Christ is the end of the law, and the knowledge of him comprehends in itself the whole sum of the gospel, there is no doubt that the object of the whole spiritual government of the church is to lead us to Christ, as it is by him alone we come to God, who is the final end of a happy life. Whosoever deviates from this in the slightest degree can never speak duly or appositely of any ordinance of God.

* *Calvin's Tracts,* Vol. II., p. 224.

2. *A True Knowledge of the Sacraments from the Knowledge of Christ.*

As the sacraments are appendages of the gospel, he only can discourse aptly and usefully of their nature, virtue, office and benefit who begins with Christ, and that not by adverting cursorily to the name of Christ, but by truly holding for what end he was given us by the Father and what blessings he has conferred upon us.

3. *Nature of the Knowledge of Christ.*

We must hold therefore that Christ, being the eternal Son of God, and of the same essence and glory with the Father, assumed our flesh to communicate to us by right of adoption that which he possessed by nature, namely, to make us sons of God. This is done when ingrafted by faith into the body of Christ, and that by the agency of the Holy Spirit we are first counted righteous by a free imputation of righteousness and then regenerated to a new life, whereby, being formed again in the image of our heavenly Father, we renounce the old man.

4. *Christ a Priest and King.*

Thus Christ in his human nature is to be considered as our priest, who expiated our sins by the one sacrifice of his death, put away all our transgressions by his obedience, provided a perfect righteousness for us, and now intercedes for us, that we may have access to God. He is to be considered as a repairer, who by the agency of his Spirit reforms whatever is vicious in us that we may cease to live to the world and the flesh and God himself may live in us. He is to be considered as a king who enriches us with all kinds of blessings, governs and defends us by his power, provides us with spiritual weapons, delivers us from all harm, and rules and guides us by the sceptre of his mouth; and he is to be so considered, that he may raise us to himself, the true God, and to the Father, until the fulfilment of what is finally to take place, viz., God be all and in all.

5. *How Christ Communicates Himself to Us.*

Moreover, that Christ may thus exhibit himself to us and produce these effects in us, he must be made one with us, and we must be ingrafted into his body. He does not infuse his life into us unless he is our head, and from him the whole body, fitly joined together, through every joint of supply according to his working, maketh increase of the body in the proportion of each member.

6. *Spiritual Communion—Institution of the Sacraments.*

The spiritual communion which we have with the Son of God takes place when he, dwelling in us by his Spirit, makes all who believe capable of all the blessings which reside in him. In order to testify this, both the preaching of the gospel was appointed and the use of the sacraments committed to us, namely, the sacraments of holy baptism and the holy supper.

7. *The Ends of the Sacraments.*

The ends of the sacraments are to be marks and badges of Christian profession and fellowship or fraternity, to be incitements to gratitude and exercises of faith and a godly life; in short, to be contracts binding us to this. But among other ends the principal one is that God may, by means of them, testify, represent, and seal his grace to us. For, although they signify nothing else than is announced to us by the word itself, yet it is a great matter, *first,* that there is submitted to our eye a kind of living images which make a deeper impression on the senses, by bringing the object in a manner directly before them, while they bring the death of Christ and all his benefits to our remembrance, that faith may be better exercised; and, *secondly,* that what the mouth of God had announced is, as it were, confirmed and ratified by seals.

8. *Gratitude.*

Now, seeing that these things which the Lord has given as testimonies and seals of his grace are true, he undoubtedly truly performs inwardly by his Spirit that which the sacraments figure to our eyes and other senses; in other words, we obtain possession of Christ as the fountain of all blessings, both in order that we may be reconciled to God by means of his death, be renewed by his Spirit to holiness of life; in short, obtain righteousness and salvation and also in order that we may give thanks for the blessings which were once exhibited on the cross, and which we daily receive by faith.

9. *The Signs and the Things Signified not Disjoined, but Distinct.*

Wherefore, though we distinguish between the signs and the things signified, as we ought, yet we do not disjoin the reality from the signs, but acknowledge that all who in faith embrace the promises there offered receive Christ spiritually, with his spiritual gifts, while those who had long been made partakers of Christ continue and renew that communion.

10. *The Promise Principally to be Looked to in the Sacraments.*

And it is proper to look not to the bare signs, but rather to the promise thereto annexed. As far, therefore, as our faith in the promise there offered prevails, so far will that virtue and efficacy of which we speak display itself. Thus the substance of water, bread and wine by no means offers Christ to us, nor makes us capable of his spiritual gifts. The promise rather is to be looked to, whose office it is to lead us to Christ by the direct way of faith—faith which makes us partakers of Christ.

11. *We are not to Stand Gazing on the Elements.*

This refutes the error of those who stand gazing on the elements, and attach their confidence of salvation to them; seeing that the sacraments separated from Christ are but empty shows, and a voice is distinctly heard throughout proclaiming that we must adhere to none but Christ alone and seek the gift of salvation from none but him.

12. *The Sacraments Effect Nothing by Themselves.*

Besides, if any good is conferred upon us by the sacraments, it is not owing to any proper virtue in them, even though in this you should include the promise by which they are distinguished; for it is God alone who acts by his Spirit. When he uses the instrumentality of the sacraments, he neither infuses his own virtue into them nor derogates in any respect from the effectual working of his Spirit, but, in adaptation to our weakness, uses them as helps; in such manner, however, that the whole power of acting remains with him alone.

13. *God Uses the Instrument, but All the Virtue is His.*

Wherefore, as Paul reminds us, that neither he that planteth nor he that watereth is anything, but God alone that giveth the increase, so also it is to be said of the sacraments that they are nothing because they will profit nothing unless God in all things make them effectual. They are indeed instruments by which God acts efficaciously when he pleases, yet so that the whole work of our salvation must be ascribed to him alone.

14. *The Whole Accomplished by Christ.*

We conclude, then, that it is Christ alone who in truth baptizes inwardly, who in the Supper makes us partakers of himself, who, in short, fulfils what the sacraments figure, and uses their aid in such manner that the whole effect resides in his Spirit.

15. *How the Sacraments Confirm.*

Thus the sacraments are sometimes called seals, and are said to nourish, confirm and advance faith, and yet the Spirit alone is properly the seal, and also the beginner and finisher of faith. For all these attributes of the sacraments sink down to a lower place, so that not even the smallest portion of our salvation is transferred to creatures or elements.

16. *All Who Partake of the Sacraments do not Partake of the Reality.*

Besides, we carefully teach that God does not exert his power indiscriminately in all who receive the sacraments, but only in the elect; for as he enlightens unto faith none but those whom he hath foreordained to life, so by the secret agency of his Spirit he makes the elect receive what the sacraments offer.

17. *The Sacraments do not Confer Grace.*

By this doctrine is overthrown that fiction of the Sophists which teaches that the sacraments confer grace on all who do not interpose the obstacle of mortal sin; for besides that in the sacraments nothing is received except by faith, we must also hold that the grace of God is by no means so annexed to them that whoso receives the sign also gains possession of the thing; for the signs are administered alike to reprobate and elect, but the reality reaches the latter only.

18. *The Gifts offered to All, but Received by Believers Only.*

It is true indeed that Christ with his gifts is offered to all in common, and that the unbelief of man not overthrowing the truth of God, the sacraments always retain their efficacy; but all are not capable of receiving Christ and his gifts. Wherefore nothing is changed on the part of God, but in regard to man each receives according to the measure of his faith.

19. *Believers Before and Without the Use of the Sacraments Communicate with Christ.*

As the use of the sacraments will confer nothing more on unbelievers than if they had abstained from it, nay, is only destructive to them, so without their use believers receive the reality which is there figured. Thus the sins of Paul were washed away by baptism, though they had been previously washed away. So likewise baptism was the laver of regeneration to Cornelius, though he had already received the Holy Spirit. So in the Supper Christ commu-

nicates himself to us, though he had previously imparted himself, and perpetually remains in us; for, seeing that each is enjoined to examine himself, it follows that faith is required of each before coming to the sacrament. Faith is not without Christ; but inasmuch as faith is confirmed and increased by the sacraments, the gifts of God are confirmed in us, and thus Christ in a manner grows in us and we in him.

20. *The Benefit not Always Received in the Act of Communicating.*

The advantage which we receive from the sacraments ought by no means to be restricted to the time at which they are administered to us, just as if the visible sign, at the moment when it is brought forward, brought the grace of God along with it; for those who were baptized when mere infants God regenerates in childhood or adolescence, occasionally even in old age. Thus the utility of baptism is open to the whole period of life, because the promise contained in it is perpetually in force; and it may sometimes happen that the use of the holy Supper, which, from thoughtlessness or slowness of heart, does little good at the time, afterwards bears its fruit.

21. *No Local Presence Must be Imagined.*

We must guard particularly against the idea of any local presence; for while the signs are present in this world, are seen by the eyes and handled by the hands, Christ, regarded as man, must be sought nowhere else than in heaven, and not otherwise than with the mind and eye of faith. Wherefore it is a perverse and impious institution to enclose him under the elements of this world.

22. *Explanation of the Words, "This is My Body."*

Those who insist that the formal words of the Supper, "This is my body; this is my blood," are to be taken in what they call the precisely literal sense we repudiate as preposterous interpreters; for we hold it out of controversy that they are to be taken figuratively —the bread and wine receiving the name of that which they signify. Nor should it be thought a new or unwonted thing to transfer the name of things figured by metonymy to the sign, as similar modes of expression occur throughout the scriptures, and we by so saying assert nothing but what is found in the most ancient and most approved writers of the church.

23. *Of the Eating of the Body.*

When it is said that Christ, by our eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood, which are here figured, feeds our souls through faith by the agency of the Holy Spirit, we are not to understand it as if any mingling or transfusion of substance took place, but that we draw life from the flesh once offered in sacrifice and the blood shed in expiation.

24. *Transubstantiation and Other Follies.*

In this way are refuted not only the fiction of the papists concerning transubstantiation, but all the gross figments and futile quibbles which either derogate from his celestial glory or are in some degree repugnant to the reality of his human nature; for we deem it no less absurd to place Christ under the bread or couple him with the bread than to transubstantiate the bread into his body.

25. *The Body of Christ Locally in Heaven.*

And that no ambiguity may remain when we say that Christ is to be sought in heaven, the expression implies and is understood by us to intimate distance of place; for though, philosophically speaking, there is no place above the skies, yet as the body of Christ, bearing the nature and mode of a human body, is finite and is contained in heaven as its place, it is necessarily distant from us in point of space as heaven is from earth.

26. *Christ not to be Adored in the Bread.*

If it is not lawful to affix Christ in our imagination to the bread and wine, much less is it lawful to worship him in the bread; for although the bread is held forth to us as a symbol and pledge of the communion which we have with Christ, yet as it is a sign and not the thing itself, and has not the thing either included in it or fixed to it, those who turn their minds towards it with the view of worshipping Christ make an idol of it.

In this document Calvin made no compromise; nor can the Zurichers be said to have made any. One element of their past creed on the Lord's Supper—the activity of the Holy Ghost in order to profitable communion—received new emphasis. That was Calvin's distinctive element.

There is a deal of confusion in the minds of modern theologians as to Calvin's view of the Supper. It is commonly supposed that his earlier view was closer akin to the Luth-

eran view; that in the "Consensus Tigurinus" he draws nearer the Zwinglian. Some even hold that later he tended toward the Lutheran view again. They tell us that on this subject he was swayed by his great desires for union, now with the Lutherans and again with the Swiss; but such men can know neither Calvin nor his teaching.

Calvin did deplore the divisions in the Protestant camp greatly. He would have healed all divisions in the Protestant ranks by the general inculcation of the truth; but to get Zurich and Geneva together Calvin would never have compromised an iota of truth. In the preface to the "Exposition" of the "Consensus" he says "We are all agreed that peace is not to be purchased by the sacrifice of truth; and hence I acknowledge that better were heaven confounded with earth than that the defence of sound doctrine should be abandoned. Whosoever heartily and strenuously opposes sophistical quibbles, which conciliate by giving a gloss to erroneous doctrine, I blame not; nay, rather, I claim for myself this praise, that there is scarcely an individual who can take more pleasure than I do in a candid confession of the truth." *

Had Calvin and the Zurichers not both honestly accepted the "Consensus" of 1549, he could not have written them as he did in 1554, viz., "But assume that there was formerly some discordance, because the thing could not be cleared up at first glance and disposed of, what humanity is there in reopening a sore which was closed up and cured? In order that the faithful might not be distracted by disputes which have only too much prevailed, we proposed to them our agreement by which they could hold. This good zealot saw clearly that all whom he styles Sacramentarians have one same faith and confess it as with one same mouth, and even if the two excellent doctors, Zwinglius and Œcolampadius, who were known to be faithful servants of Jesus Christ, were still alive, they would not change one word of our

* *Calvin's Tracts,* Vol. II., p. 222.

doctrine. For our good brother of blessed memory, Martin Bucer, after seeing our agreement, wrote me that it was an inestimable blessing for the whole church. Wherefore there is more malice in this new corrector * thus stirring up odium on account of it. . . .

"On the whole, my dear and honored brethren, as we ought to take at least as much pains in maintaining the truth and cherishing concord as Satan in striving to ruin both, I have wished to do what was in my power, and also try, if peradventure those who have hitherto been of too obstinate a temper might be tamed; if not, that those who are of sound judgment should be furnished with the defence of our cause so as to be the better able to stop their mouths.

"This blockhead, of whom I am sorry to speak so often, reproaches us with having such an abyss of opinions that no one understands what his companion would say. Now, methinks, I know so well what you believe and hold that I am confident of having here written down what each of you would write in the same place; for I have not usurped the office of dictating what you are to confess after me, but rather refer the whole to your discretion. I have, however, proceeded boldly to compose this short treatise [the "Exposition"] because by former experience I had learned how agreeable my labors had been to you, and that you had also sufficiently declared it to be so." †

Nobody who knows John Calvin can doubt, since he could write thus, that he believed that in 1554 he stood where he had in 1549. Nor can any one read the "Institutes," so frequently revised before this and revised with great care after this, and then read his tracts on the Supper, and fail to see that in Calvin's own view his doctrine of the Supper in the "Consensus" was his doctrine of the Supper in the "Institutes."

* The "corrector" referred to here had been making an attack on the "Consensus Tigurinus."

† *Tracts,* Vol. II., pp. 210-212.

There is in the "Institutes" some figurative language employed of our union with Christ and of the Supper. He sets his doctrine forth with great plainness in the "Consensus." He sets the same doctrine forth everywhere. He taught the same doctrine always. That doctrine is also the doctrine of our standards; and it is the doctrine of the great teachers of our church, save that Calvin made more of the need of the Holy Spirit in order to our getting any good out of the ordinance, in order to the deepening of our union with Christ our Head. Calvin made much of the Holy Spirit.

For a time he hoped that this "Consensus" would prevail also in Germany; but the stricter Lutherans took offence.

§ 22. *The Controversy with Servetus; an Illustration of Calvin's Honor to God's Word and the Unity of the Church.*

Calvin stood for a pure doctrine and a pure discipline. "Under pain of abdication," Rilliet says, "Calvin must do everything rather than suffer by his side in Geneva a man whom he considered the greatest enemy of the Reformation, and the critical position in which he saw it in the bosom of the republic was one motive more to remove, if it was possible, the new element of dissolution which the free sojourn of Servetus would have created. . . . To tolerate Servetus with impunity in Geneva would have been for Calvin to exile himself. . . . He had no alternative. The man whom a Calvinist accusation had caused to be arrested, tried and condemned to the flames in France could not find an asylum in the city from which that accusation had issued." * This was no doubt Calvin's judgment. The unity, nay, the very existence of the church of Geneva, as well as the honor of God and his word, seemed to Calvin to demand of him all he did in the case of Servetus.

But of the case of Servetus more in detail:

* Quoted in Schaff: Vol. VII., pp. 765, 766.

Michael Servetus was born at Villanueva, a city of Aragon, in the year 1509. He received his early education in a Dominican convent. Later, being destined to the law by his father, he studied at Toulouse. He at one time belonged to the household of Quintana, father confessor of the Emperor Charles V., and so derived his support from the church. Even then, according to his own testimony, he regarded the Roman Church as a harlot and murderess. In 1530 he appeared at Basle and worried the reformers. Œcolampadius, Capito and Bucer, and Zwingli, who was on a visit there at the time, by his "vain, presumptuous and argumentative" character and subversive doctrines concerning Christ. During 1531 and 1532 he was frequently in Basle, sometimes in the suite of the emperor. He was very ambitious. He regarded himself as the true reformer. In 1531 he brought out his first work on the "Errors of the Trinity," putting his real name on the title page. The work was a bitter attack on the doctrine of the Trinity, not without a certain dash and plausibility, but vague and superficial. It made a great stir. The reformers were universally indignant. Bucer declared from the pulpit that the writer deserved to be torn limb from limb. The government of Basle caused the book to be seized. The author, however, soon published another work in which he explained away or retracted most of the first, not as wrong, but as immature. This second work repeated the attacks on the Trinity, and betrayed a wild and impious pantheism. It made little stir, and Servetus, despairing of any considerable success in Germany or Switzerland, betook himself to France.

He was in Paris in 1534 both as professor and student, receiving instruction in medicine, mathematics and astronomy. He became distinguished for his acute perception, vivid imagination and great powers of acquisition, and exuberance in theories, some ingenious and worthy, others absurd. He conjectured the mode of the blood's circulation. His lectures on astronomy and mathematics were

mixtures of science and fancies. While his gifts of mind and speech drew students to his rooms, his character repelled them. He was exacting, and arrogant, and self-complacent. He became offensive to the "Parliament" of Paris, and they forbade him to teach astrology or to predict from the stars. In consequence he left Paris, resided for short periods at Lyons, Avignon and Charlieu. In 1542 he settled at Vienne in Duphine. There he lived twelve years under the name of Villanueva, conformed outwardly to the Roman Catholic Church, and was in high repute as a physician. But he continued to busy himself in schemes for the reform of Christianity. He gave himself to the study of Revelation, and concluded that the time was come for a great struggle in the church, and that he was to play a big part in that struggle. He set forth his multitudinous fancies in a new work called "Restoration of Christianity." Stähelin gives this account of the teaching of the book, "The fundamental principle of the whole book is the assertion of the one absolute and indivisible God. It would be impossible to imagine any direct action of God upon the world; he is separated from it by an immeasurable abyss. The instruments which he uses, the links which unite the infinite and the finite, are found in the world of thought. Every thought or idea must be contemplated as a personal reality, having its origin in the being of God, and itself an image of his eternal essence. Perfectly distinct and yet not separate from God, these ideas animate matter, and thus unite it to God. There are, therefore, three worlds, each of which has its own separate existence, although they are all closely united one to the other—God, ideas, and things or beings. All beings are contained in ideas, all ideas in God; God is all things, and all things are God." *

Some modern apologists for Servetus attempt to deny that Servetus was a pantheist; but their denial does not seem well founded. The author who can say, "As the word

* Quoted in Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* p. 299.

of God is essentially man, so the Spirit of God is essentially the spirit of man. By the power of the resurrection all the primitive elements of the body and spirit have been renewed, glorified and immortalized, and all these are communicated to us by Christ in baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Holy Spirit is the breath from the mouth of Christ (John xx. 22). As God breathes into man the soul with the air, so Christ breathes into his disciples the Holy Spirit with the air. . . . The deity in the stone is the stone, in gold it is gold, in the wood it is wood, according to the proper idea of things. In a more excellent way the deity in man is man, in the spirit it is spirit." * We say the man who could talk so gave John Calvin good ground for calling him a pantheist, which he did.

In his anthropology Servetus was a Pelagian. He held to baptismal regeneration with the Roman Catholics; but he rejected infant baptism as an invention of the devil and the second root of all the corruptions of the church.

Calvin and Servetus had been in Paris together in 1534. The antagonism broke out there. They were to meet in public disputation, but Servetus failed to keep the appointment. Nevertheless, owing to his itch to come into relations with so great a man as Calvin, Servetus wrote him many letters between 1540 and 1546. Calvin answered his letters, but was careful to avoid the appearance of intimacy with him. He was not hopeless of his conversion, knowing the power of God's Spirit. This is shown in a letter of his to Frellon. But in the year 1548 the correspondence appears to have wholly ceased. In that year Calvin writes to Viret, "I suppose you have read the answer which I sent Servetus; it was my wish to have nothing more to do with this incurably hard-necked, heretical man, and certainly it was well to follow in this case the precept of the apostle." † Servetus subsequently sent to Calvin, however, a copy

* *Rest,* 182. Quoted in Schaff: Vol. VII., p. 746.

† Henry: *Life of Calvin,* Vol. II., p. 182.

of the "Institutes" full of marginal notes in which he attacked the doctrines the work contained.

The publication of his "Restitution of Christianity," between September, 1552, and January, 1553, without name of author or printer, but with the initial letters of the author's name and country at the end—M. S. V.—Michael Servetus, Villanueva, was the occasion of a storm both at Lyons, a seat of Roman Catholic power, and at Geneva.

A refugee at Geneva twitted a Romanist relative at Lyons with indifferentism on the part of the Papal Church of Lyons to license. He instanced and described the case of Servetus and his works. He even sent the first four pages of the "Restitution of Christianity" to prove what Servetus had done.

The Catholic authorities at Lyons at once took the matter in hand. Servetus tried to lie out of the authorship; but this was impossible. Too many indications pointed to Servetus. The refugee who had sent the first leaves of the "Restitution" was appealed to. This man (William de Trie) answered as follows, "When I wrote the letter which you communicated to those who were in it accused of indifference, I did not think that the matter would have gone so far. My only intention was to let you see the fine zeal and devotion of those who call themselves the pillars of the church, and yet allow such evils to exist among them, whilst they harshly persecute poor Christians who desire nothing more than to serve God in simplicity. . . . If the printed book was placed before him, he might deny it, but he cannot deny his own writing. . . . But I must confess that I have had great difficulty in obtaining from Monsieur Calvin that which I send you; not that he is unwilling that such execrable blasphemy should be punished, but that it seems to him that, since he does not wield the sword of justice, it is his duty to confute heresy by sound doctrine rather than to seek to extirpate it by any other method; but I have importuned him so greatly, representing that I should be charged with making reckless

assertions unless he come to my aid, that at length he has consented to give up that which I send you." *

The matter which DeTrie thought so important were certain pages of the "Institutes" annotated in Servetus' own hand-writing, and certain autograph letters from Servetus to Calvin in which he maintained the very notions maintained in the "Restitution."

Servetus was utterly unable to defend himself against this new evidence. After some pitiful tergiversation, he is said to have burst into tears and uttered the most "unexpected lie, denying that he was Servetus." "I will tell you," said he, "the whole truth. Twenty-five years ago when I was in Germany, a book by a certain Servetus, a Spaniard, was published at Hagenau; I do not know whence he came. At that time I was in correspondence with Calvin; he addressed me as Servetus on account of the similarity of our views, and after that I assumed the character of Servetus." †

After this exhibition of himself severer measures were undertaken against him. He was arrested and imprisoned; but was aided apparently by the jailor and other friends to escape. His whereabouts between this date, April 5, 1553, and July, 1553, are unknown. Meanwhile, on the 17th of June, his Roman Catholic judges had condemned him to be "burnt alive over a slow fire at the place of public execution, so that his body should be reduced to cinders as well as his books."

On the 17th of July Servetus took up his abode in a little hostelrie on the banks of the Rhone, in Geneva, where he lingered for twenty-seven days. To his host, whose curiosity was greatly excited about him, he replied, "No" [I am not married]. "There are plenty of women in the world without marrying." It seems probable that he had

* Quoted in Guizot: *St. Louis and John Calvin,* pp. 307, 308, from *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1848, 1,822.

† Henry: *Life of Calvin,* pp. 189, 190.

come to Geneva relying on the aid of the Libertines, who were just at this time gathering themselves for another struggle with Calvin; but John Calvin was more than a match for both. He requested one of the syndics to arrest Servetus, and accordingly this was done on the 13th of August, 1553. He provided a formal prosecutor. In a letter to Sulzer, dated 8th September, 1553, Calvin says, "For I do not disguise it, that I considered it my duty to put a check, so far as I could, upon this most obstinate and ungovernable man, that his contagion might not spread further." * The first examination of Servetus took place on the 15th of August; thence the trial dragged its slow length along for two months. The Little Council, which was the chief legislative and judicial organ of the little republic, before which the trial took place, was soon convinced of the substantial correctness of Calvin's charges. Calvin had really become the prosecutor after the opening of the trial; but such Libertines as were members of the council did what they could to stay proceedings. On the 19th of September the council determined to apply officially to the pastors and magistrates of the four cantons of Bern, Zurich, Schaffhausen and Basle for their opinion of the trial. On the 18th of October their messengers returned, bringing the answers. While cautious, guarded and sorrowful in tone, they were unanimous in recommending severity in dealing with the accused.

At length, on the 26th of October, the council passed a resolution condemning him to be burnt alive for his great errors and blasphemies.

During the trial Calvin had shown great sternness and horror of Servetus' views and character; but in vituperative denunciation he was far surpassed by Servetus. He had never concealed his feelings that the penalty ought to be capital, but he used all his endeavors to change the manner of death from burning to some milder form.

* *Calvin's Letters,* Vol. II., p. 428.

When brought together by the intervention of Farel just prior to the execution, Servetus begged Calvin's pardon. Calvin protested that he had never carried any private animosity toward him, and reminded Servetus of his efforts to win him to the truth. Calvin appears to us cold in this interview; but he had been cruelly abused, and entered on the conversation without hope of accomplishing any real good. He regarded Servetus as a hopeless heretic.

Calvin has been severely blamed for the death of Servetus, and he is blameworthy in connection with that matter, but not as much as he is often made out to be.

He is blameworthy for holding that the state ought to hold Jesus Christ as its head, profess his religion and vindicate both tables of the Decalogue. He was not blameworthy for holding that Servetus was a profane and impious heretic and worthy of extreme punishment had the republic been legitimately theocratic. His union of church and state drove him logically to persecution, as such union must always logically do. He had a wrong creed as to proper relation of church and state and conscientiously acted up to it. He believed that the state ought to vindicate the first table of the Decalogue, and under his inspiration Geneva vindicated it. It is often alleged, too, that such conduct toward Servetus is in direct conflict with the Protestant principle, the right of private judgment.

But (1) the right of private judgment is not a right of license in overt profanity and impiety to the Creator and moral Governor of the universe. (2) The blame which attaches to Calvin for not having seen that God has never given any state, but that of ancient Israel, the right to profess his worship as the Redeemer God and vindicate the first table of the Decalogue, attaches equally to all Christendom of his day. Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, German and Swiss Reformed, all held the propriety of State religion and persecution of heretics. Thousands were put to death in his life-time by Protestants and Roman Catholics whose lives were unexceptionable, simply because

they were Lutherans, Reformed, or Papists, as the case might be. Melanchthon, Martin Bucer, the Swiss reformers, without exception, living at the time, and Cranmer approved of the execution of Servetus, and many of them in so many words.

The only dissentient voices heard in the age were those of a few free thinkers, whom fellow-feeling made wondrous kind. Toleration and liberty of religious belief came only after long ages of persecution and after persecution was seen to be utterly impotent to accomplish its end. Toleration and liberty of belief were involved in the Reformation; but the germ developed slowly. The world had been so long used to union of church and state.

Now, are we to blame Calvin, who saw so much of truth, above all the world because he saw not the truth on this point? Miserable pigmies! we survey the life of Calvin in the light of the torch which he alone held up and see this one considerable failure of his and decry him. He made Geneva a city set on a hill indeed. Men can see clearly in her light. They have seen this relatively small blotch on her great luminary; they would persuade us that this luminary was a monster of darkness. Calvin was a man. He erred in this case as all the rest of Christendom was erring. Doing so, he was still the greatest and best man in Christendom on the day he did it. Ernest Renan is right when he says that Calvin succeeded in his work as reformer "because he was the most Christian man of his age." *

He did here what he thought he ought to do for the honor of God's truth and the safety of his church.

§ 23. *Calvin's Death.*

Calvin's struggles were not over with 1553. The Libertines made some further, but feeble, efforts against him. After 1555, however, he had peace in Geneva. The ene-

* Quoted in Bungener: *Life of Calvin,* p. 40.

mies of the word and the church were cowed, if not annihilated. Thence for nine years he continued his great labors. He wrote, he preached, he lectured, he attended the meetings of the consistory and of the Venerable Company of Pastors. He did this in spite of growing maladies, headaches and dyspepsia, gravel and gout, fever and asthma. He carried on his shoulders the burdens of Reformed Christendom, even after his own physical infirmities had reduced him to a state of the greatest exhaustion.

He preached for the last time on the 6th of February, 1564; he was carried to church and partook of the communion for the last time on the 2d of April; he made his last will and testament on the 25th of April, in which he acknowledged his own unworthiness and his trust in God's free election of grace and the abounding merits of Christ; he was visited by the four syndics and the whole Little Council of the republic on the 27th of April, and addressed them as a father, thanking them for their devotion, begging pardon for his gusts of temper, and exhorting them to preserve in Geneva the pure doctrine and government of the gospel; he made a similar address to all the ministers of Geneva on the 28th and took an affectionate leave of them; he had these ministers to dine in his house on the 19th of May, was himself carried to the table, ate a little with them and tried to converse, but growing weary had to be taken to his chamber, leaving with the words, "This wall will not hinder my being present with you in spirit, though absent in body." Farel (in his eightieth year) walked all the way to Geneva from Neuchâtel to take leave of the man whom he had compelled to work in Geneva, and whose glorious career he had watched without the least shadow of envy.

With the precious word of God, which he had done so much to make plain to his own and all subsequent ages, in his heart and on his tongue, he died on the 27th of May, 1564.

§ 24. *Some of Calvin's Characteristics.*

1. Physically a man "all bone and nerve." He was of medium height, dark complexion, thin, pale, in feeble health. His best features were flaming eyes, a lofty forehead, a prominent nose, a well-formed mouth; but his whole face was finely cut and indicative of resolution, penetration and intelligence.

2. Not without admiration for beauty in nature, though it is charged that he was wanting in this trait. The fourteenth chapter of the first book of the "Institutes," on Creation, is full of admiration for the beauty of the universe. Calvin does not indeed go into laudations of the Alps; it is a remarkable fact that one has to search far in the works of his contemporaries for expressions of admiration of these wonders of Europe. Calvin's life was so busy that æsthetics ought to have been pushed aside. There was call for the exercise of nobler faculties.

3. He loved poetry and music, could compose correctly at least, and gave each its proper place in the worship of the Reformed Church. Luther is usually held in happy contrast to Calvin as a poet and musician, and so he may be; but Calvin had real and just appreciation of these arts.

4. Calvin was a man of warm and intense affections, though reserved. He is often misjudged as cold and unemotional, as an intellectual, logical machine. This is far from true. The history of his domestic life and his correspondence with Melanchthon, Viret, Farel and many others prove this grossly unjust. His friendships were intense, his affections passionate. His onerous duties, his delicate health, his reserve of temperament modified the expressions of his regards; but he felt intensely. His feelings were one of the big parts of him.

5. A man of the greatest courage. He tells us that he was constitutionally timid. So he seems to have been; but his courage always rose with the occasion. In the presence of the greatest dangers his very daring annihilated danger.

6. He was a man of *iron will.* He was always resolute.

In exile or the honored moral head of Geneva alike this resolution was one of his marked traits. This explains his courage. That was never insensibility to danger. It was the resolute doing of what he thought he ought in spite of the clearest perception of danger.

7. He was a man of extraordinary intellectual powers—accute observation, retentive memory, constructive imagination, great elaborative power, the logical faculty of an Aristotle. He has been called "the Aristotle of the Reformation," *"the theologian,"* and "the Thomas Aquinas of the Reformed Church," in consideration of his powers and achievements. We are amazed at his clearness and profundity.

Passing now to his qualities as a Christian—

8. The fear—reverent and holy, not craven fear—of God and zeal for his glory was the dominant characteristic of his life. He felt that he belonged to God; that God had put him into this world to glorify himself in him, and that God would at once graciously help him meet his responsibilities and hold him to account. His business was to glorify God. In the preface to the last edition of his "Institutes" he writes, "I have the testimony of my own conscience. . . . that since I undertook the office of teacher I have had no other object in view than to profit the church by maintaining the pure doctrine of godliness." Hence the "majesty of his character," of which the Genevese spoke and by which they were so much impressed. He was devoted to God and conscious of it.

His life was hid with Christ in God. No man cared less for the things of this life. No man had his affections more set on things above. He loved and practiced apostolic poverty. He could say with Paul, "We are poor, but make many rich."

9. He was a good hater of things evil. He is sometimes charged with having been passionate, censorious and impatient of contradictions, and perhaps with a degree of justice; but his passion was usually directed against moral

folly, against wickedness, and so his censoriousness and impatience of contradiction—not against mere stupidity. Indeed, he was remarkable for his patience and kindly Christian spirit in dealing with those who were weak rather than wicked. If he was sometimes impatient of contradiction, it is pertinent to observe that the eagle might be impatient of a snail's attempt to instruct him how to fly. Some men have no right to expect a patient hearing of their opinions. They have not thought enough, maybe from lack of diligence or opportunity, maybe from lack of capacity.

10. Calvin was intolerant of error. So every man should be, and that, too, whether the error be one of theory or practice; for theory soon expresses itself in life. We ought to be as intolerant of error as Calvin was; but we ought not to use some weapons against it which Calvin, under the influence of the spirit of his age, used.

11. He was a man of catholic spirit. Lutherans, Anglicans and Polish Protestants were all really Christians to him. Presbyterians of to-day are remarkable for catholicity of spirit. They get it legitimately. Calvin was a big, broad man—bigger than Luther. He undervalued no truth, but he could make the distinction between essential truths and truths of less importance.

12. Calvin was the most father-like man of the Reformation period in his attitude toward Christendom. The mighty and splendid Luther was a big, warlike elder brother, bragging gloriously ever of what he was ever gloriously doing. Listen to him as he begins his will, "I am well known in heaven, on earth and in hell," and as he closes it, "This wrote the notary of God and the witness of his gospel, Dr. Martin Luther." Calvin, though later born, comes into the place of earthly father to all Protestant Christendom; he thinks for it, toils for it, comforts it, carries it through dangers, fights for it, but says little of his labors except when attacked. He was the Paul—he, not Luther—of the Reformation period. John Calvin seems to have been the most Christlike man of his age.

CHAPTER VI.

Influence of John Calvin.

§ 25. *Not Perpetuated by Imposing Tomb.*

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord; and he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." According to Calvin's injunction, that everything should be done "after the customary fashion, the earth alone covered his remains, and the only official epitaph he received was that inscribed beside his name in the consistorial register, "Went to God, Saturday the 27th." How long his dust was left undisturbed no man can say; but his grave has been dug over again and again for more than two centuries. Toward the middle of our century a small black stone was set to mark the place where his remains were supposed to have been laid; but there is no certainty that the spot has been correctly identified.

"Strangers," says Bungener, " have been seen who are indignant at that small stone; but others contemplate it with more emotion than would have been called forth by a splendid mausoleum, even though it unquestionably pointed out the spot. Such an abandonment of the perishable being brings you face to face with the thinking, living, immortal being in another world—already immortal on earth by the profound and ineffaceable traces which God has given him to leave upon it. You contemplate him in his work; you follow him through three centuries which have seen him so mighty over so many souls, even of those who have been trained to hate him; and there you understand how the city created in his image should have felt no more than he did the need of marking out his last resting place. . . . Cal-

vin was going to carry on, when absent in the body, that reign which his genius and faith had founded. Thus thought the Genevese and all those who already peopled his vast empire and all those who were yet to people it, and death in causing the man to disappear did but exalt the reformer." *

Calvin had his only worthy monument in his works, which speak of a candor and manly honesty which never evaded a difficulty, and which revealed a clearness, a thoroughness and a conciseness without a parallel, in those immortal "Institutes" and in those commentaries, in what he had taught and the church which he had fashioned. We can name no other man since the apostles who has exerted so great and beneficent an influence on history, and that in so many directions. He has specially helped education, politics, religion and family life. We will illustrate by a brief consideration of one or two of these lines of influence.

§ 26. *His Influence on Civil and Religious Liberty.*

We shall not point to the historical proofs of this influence. The most respectable writers on modern history, irrespective of their schools, teach us that Calvin's influence on civil and religious liberty has been vast. They tell us particularly that the civil and religious liberty of the Dutch, the British and the North Americans of to-day is the fruitage of Calvinistic teaching; and they trace these channels of influence in no uncertain way. We propose here to indicate merely how Calvinistic teaching must beget the spirit of liberty both civil and religious.

Calvin's form of church government was the purest, manliest, noblest type of church government on earth. It was a high type of representative government. It could not fail to suggest the right of suffrage in those citizens of civil governments who were possessed of the proper character and intelligence, and the rule of the state only by officers so chosen by the free voices of the citizens. As it

* *Life of Calvin,* pp. 348, 349.

suggested this as to the government of state, so by contrast with other forms of ecclesiastical government it stimulated liberty in churches.

But certain of Calvin's theological and anthropological teaching in a still more powerful way stimulated the spirit of civil and religious liberty, particularly his doctrines of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Calvin represented truly the sovereignty of God as absolute. When God commands a certain thing and any other being bids another thing, a man must do what God commands. In the first Confession of the Genevese, prepared by Farel and Calvin, man's duties toward the state are defined. We are there taught that the citizen must obey all decrees and statutes, *except those which contravene the commandments of God.* Look toward that city set on a hill, all tyrants, whether kinglings, democracies, plutocracies or hierarchies. For there men believe that God is of right the one absolute sovereign. Therefore, be careful in what direction you exercise your powers. Order these men and their disciples to do something contrary to the word of God. They will defy you. Ye Spanish tyrants in the Netherlands, ye Stuarts, strutting about the divine right of kings, and all your like, look sharp. Your sovereignty at best is only a very relative thing, as the Calvinists see things. God is their sovereign absolute, they know; and they know he will hold them responsible for obedience to him, whatever you bid and however you threaten. Make war on their duty as defined by God in his word, imprison, burn, bury alive, you cannot hold the allegiance of those Calvinists. They know they are God's in right and fact. Aye, they know that they are kings in virtue of the divine birthright, priests by the imposition of the noblest hand—chosen of God, born of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Such truths breed liberty.

§ 27. *The Conserving Power of Calvinism in Protestant Church Life.*

The earlier reformers burst the shackles of Romanism

and taught some glorious truths with great clearness. Calvin rounded out their teaching, gave it systematic form and permanence. It may be seriously doubted whether Protestantism would have been more than a temporary phase in the history of Western Christendom without John Calvin's work. He built up for it an impregnable fortress of truth in his "Institutes" and commentaries, and by his discipline moulded the life by the application thereto of the power of God.

The Calvinistic churches in the world to-day remain, as Calvin was, the great expounders of the gospel to the world by word and life, and the steadying power for all Protestant Christendom, without which the rest of Protestantism could not do its work. They have been the teachers and, within certain limits, the guides and the support of the whole Protestant world.

§ 28. *The Conclusion.*

My fellow-students for the gospel ministry in Union Seminary, this rough sketch of the Genevan Reformation and its great leader has been set before you not simply with the hope of informing your minds. We have hoped that by dwelling on the character of Calvin as God made him you might be led to follow him as he followed Christ; that you might catch something of his great spirit, might come to honor God's word as he honored it and toil for God's church as he toiled for it, come to fear God and him alone as he feared God; might be led, by the example of his assiduity in the years of preparation for his great work, to cultivate the same spirit of devotion now and here in yourselves.

I warn you that the truth about such a man as Calvin cannot be brought to your attention without your thereby becoming responsible for it. You are under a moral obligation to use his great example as a means for your own spiritual as well as intellectual growth.

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